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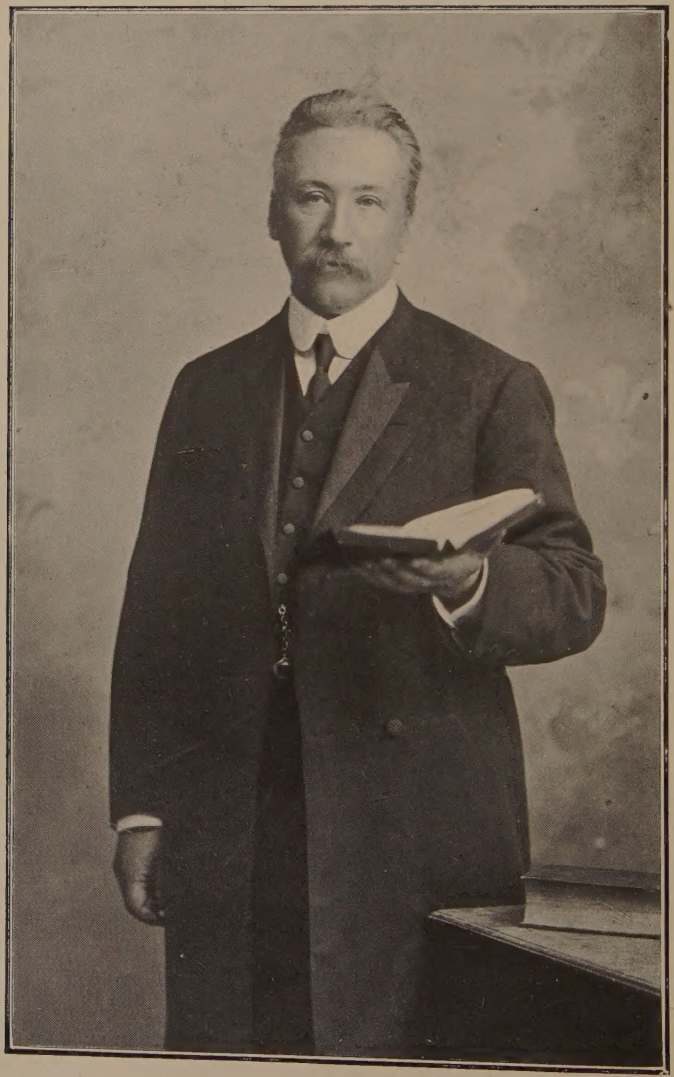

THOMAS SPURGEON.

[*Frontispiece*

THOMAS SPURGEON

A BIOGRAPHY

BY

W. Y. FULLERTON

AUTHOR OF
"AT THE SIXTIETH MILESTONE," "LIFE'S DUSTY WAY"
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PREFACE

THREE motives combined to impel me to attempt this book—love to my friend, reverence for the gentle lady who bears his name, and gratitude to the father whose name he bore. I have found it impossible to disentangle the life of Thomas Spurgeon from his father's, for he was truly his father's son. The interest of the following pages will be none the less, I hope, because of the frequent reference to C. H. Spurgeon; I think his son would be pleased to have it so.

My admiration for my friend has been deepened as I have examined the memorials of the past, read his letters—many of them quite intimate, and come to know more closely the inner springs of his conduct. His life had its limitations, of course, but it was utterly sincere and altogether true. He was what he appeared to be—that and no other. I finish my grateful labour with the assurance that, however unworthily performed, it has been worth while to write this biography—a story so full of interest and incident, and, in spite of the defects in its telling, I believe its readers will think it worth while too.

My grateful thanks are due to Mrs. Thomas Spurgeon for her unstinted help in the choice of material, and her guidance in various perplexities; to Mr. Charles Spurgeon for his sympathetic assis-

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tance so freely rendered; to Mr. William Higgs for placing his remarkable collection of contemporary evidence at my disposal, as well as for the portrait page of the Spurgeon sons from infancy to manhood; and to Mrs. E. G. Cook for biographical extracts from Mr. Spurgeon's writings and sermons. I also heartily recognize the kindness of many friends who have allowed me to see such of Mr. Spurgeon's letters as were in their possession; where extracts have been made from them the sources are acknowledged, but they have all been helpful in supplying an atmosphere.

The volume might easily have been twice its present size, but enough has been written, I think, to present the living figure of the man whom many loved, the man who humbly claimed his heritage, and stedfastly followed in his father's steps towards their Common Goal. His memory beckons us all forward.

W. Y. Fullerton.

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CHAPTER I

THE NAME HE BORE

THE name of Spurgeon is written large in the annals of the world, and graven deep in the heart of the Church. But until that December evening in 1853 when, in country garb, with a black satin stock, and a blue handkerchief adorned with white spots, a young preacher came to London and lodged in a boarding-house in Bloomsbury, it was practically unknown. Then it suddenly flashed upon the history of his time, the preacher himself, all unconsciously, being the best illustration of the text of his sermon at New Park Street Chapel the next morning: "Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Truly Spurgeon was a good gift to his generation, a light from the Source of Light; those who invited him from his little corner in Cambridgeshire must almost have been inspired, and long since, they, and he, and the son whose biography is the burden of this book, know in their own experience the truth of the text on the evening of that memorable day: "They are without fault before the throne of God."

It would be an exaggeration to say that the

name was utterly unknown before that day, for it was borne by Huguenot ancestors who in their time were worthy; worthily borne, too, by the godly Congregational minister of Stambourne, whose grandfatherly guardian influence on the lad was so deep and lasting, and by John Spurgeon, his father, also a Congregational minister, who outlived his son, and exercised a gracious ministry in various places. Him I knew well, preached for him at Islington, heard him preach in his son's Tabernacle, but neither in him nor in his father was there a trace of the genius of the Messenger of God who thrilled the world with his gospel, became the acknowledged evangelical leader of his day, and made the name of Spurgeon an honour to the Baptists for all time. Yet until he was fourteen years of age he had never heard of the Baptists, and it was amongst the Methodists that on the sixth day of January, 1850, he first came into a living experience of the grace of God. Years after he wrote: "Richard Knill says that at such a time of the day, clang went every harp in heaven for Richard Knill was born again; and it was even so with me."

The story of that snowy Sunday has been often told. Perhaps Thomas Spurgeon may be allowed to tell it again. "I stood the week before last," he says in a sermon, "with uncovered head and throbbing heart, as near as it was possible to get to the spot where my dear father, your late beloved pastor, 'looked and lived.' I paid a special visit to the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Artillery Street, Colchester, to see the place where the

local preacher cried, 'Young man, you look very miserable! Look to Jesus. Young man, look to Jesus, look and live.' They have erected a tablet with an inscription after this fashion, 'Near this spot C. H. Spurgeon looked and lived.' And then there is a quotation from one of his sermons describing his conversion. It was a sacred spot to me and to many another. Run and see it if you have opportunity, and as you look at it, lift up your heart to God that you may be kept looking to Jesus, and that your loved ones may be kept looking also. A single look will save thee.

> "'I looked on Him, He looked on me,
> And we were one for ever.'

That is the briefest description of C. H. Spurgeon's conversion that I have ever seen, and I do not think there could be a better."

There is, I imagine, no case on record where a preacher so instantly claimed the ear of the people, and held it for so long a time. He did not gradually grow in popular favour, he descended as a star from heaven. William Pitt is the only public man who in an equal degree walked upon the stage of life as one whose right it was to reign. It is almost impossible for the present generation to realize how great was the renown of Spurgeon at his zenith. He was not only followed and admired, he was trusted and loved beyond his fellows. Thomas Binney was London's greatest preacher when Spurgeon arrived, and at first he was inclined to deride the boy in the pulpit as a charlatan, but he quickly saw his mistake, and to a

gathering of students he said: "I have enjoyed some amount of popularity; I have always been able to draw together a congregation; but in the person of Mr. Spurgeon, we see a young man, be he who he may and come whence he will, who at twenty-four hours' notice can command a congregation of twenty thousand people. Now I have never been able to do that, and I never knew of anybody else who could do it."

D. L. Moody had not then appeared upon the scene, but mighty as was his influence his verdict on Spurgeon was: "In regard to coming to your Tabernacle I consider it a great honour to be invited: and, in fact, I should consider it an honour to black your boots, but to preach to your people would be out of the question. If they will not turn to God under your preaching, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." He did, however, preach in the Tabernacle afterwards, and in his London campaign he got Spurgeon to preach for him. In writing to thank him he said: "I wish you could give us every night you can for the next sixty days. There are so few men who can draw on a week night." Remember that this was twenty-two years after Spurgeon had come to London, and that during all that time he was able at any time to command a crowd as great as Chrysostom in Constantinople or Savonarola in Florence, though each of them commanded it for a much shorter time.

That was the wonder of it: he built a Tabernacle seating between five or six thousand persons, and able to contain over seven thousand, and

for thirty-eight years maintained his congregation there and elsewhere in London. At one time he moved to the Agricultural Hall and filled it. Francis and Bernard, Wesley and Whitefield gathered as great throngs, but they passed from place to place, while Spurgeon remained rooted in the metropolis. Henry Ward Beecher and Canon Liddon were as popular, but they did not preach so continuously nor so long. There are, indeed, not wanting some who trace back through the history of the Church and only find Spurgeon's peer in Paul.

The wonder grows when we consider that week by week the sermons were printed and sold, and reproduced in countless ways. Ian Maclaren has told us of the Scotch wife who gave parting instructions to her husband when he went to town, and called after him the final message: "Dinna forget Spurgeon," and has added to the story his own verdict on the preacher. "Who of all preachers you can mention in our day could have held such companies save Spurgeon? Who is to take their place when the last of these well-known sermons disappear from village shops and cottage shelves? Is there any other gospel which will ever be so understanded of the people, or so move human hearts, as that which Spurgeon preached in the best words of our own tongue? . . . I cannot forget Spurgeon." In thousands of homes these sermons were read, in many little assemblies they were the message of God to the people, and not a few preachers boldly redelivered them to their congregations. So that all over the world

Spurgeon led people to God, comforted people in their sorrows and stablished them in their faith. Little wonder that he was venerated and adored. I know of an old man in a country district which Spurgeon was to visit who asked permission from his master to attend the preaching. The farmer insisted on the day's work being done first, and so the old man began at the first streak of day to use his scythe, and at every sweep of it he said: "Spurgeon! Spurgeon! Spurgeon!" until, having finished his task, with a glad spirit he got away to hear the man whose name had inspired his heart for years and been on his lip all the morning.

There is also a story of an old lady who was so comforted by one of the printed sermons that she bought twenty copies of it, and had them bound in a volume.

Dr. MacArthur of New York tells that on passing the cottage by the gate of Melrose Abbey he discovered how Spurgeon was honoured there. "I saw an old Scotch lady, with white hair and the bloom of heather on her cheek, and she was sitting and reading. She was the wife of the gate-keeper, and I could not help noticing, without intending to be intrusive, that she was reading one of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons. I said to her, 'I am glad you are reading that sermon, for I love the man and the sermons,' and I added, 'do you know I expect to see him and hear him next Sunday.' She looked at me a moment, and then exclaimed, 'Oh! what wadna *I* gie to see his face, and hear his voice!' She called her husband that he might look at me, because I was

to look at Spurgeon on Sunday, and she said: 'I dinna wish to envy ye, but I wad gie all I hae if I could see him mysel'.'"

Very pertinently *The Pall Mall Gazette* said: "At first a curiosity, then a notoriety, but he has been recognized long since as one of the first celebrities of the day." *The Spectator* gave as true a verdict: "Mr. Spurgeon is, in fact, a Cobden in the pulpit preaching a well-understood form of Christianity instead of Free Trade." *The Church Times* was generous enough to admit that "he was a master of an English style which many a scholar might envy; the style could only have been acquired by great pains, and by the constant study of the best literary models which it recalls." *The Christian Weekly* recalled the fact that "one of the most accomplished literary critics of our time has declared that 'in Mr. Spurgeon's sermons there are many passages which a really catholic anthology of English prose would not omit, and an informing spirit which hardly breathes among us now.'"

Professor Ferrier said to Principal Tulloch when they had heard a sermon in the Tabernacle —"It sat so close to reality." Alongside which may be put the saying of a man who was encountered outside the Tabernacle under the portico by another from his village. The second, an earnest Christian man, expressed to the first, who was one nobody would have expected to go and hear Spurgeon, his astonishment in finding him there. "Ah," he answered in a tone of unfeigned solemnity, "every man has his own tale told here."

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"Coming to London," Dr. Culross wrote, "scarcely out of his boyhood he discarded pulpit twang and jargon, threw off the trammels of culture, and spoke straight out of the heart in the simplest and clearest language that he could command;" while Dr. Clifford declares: "He initiated a new epoch in spiritual reality, of passionate faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the one remedy for sin, of robust and manly religion, and of hatred of all shibboleths, hesitations and insincerities. In preaching he created a revolution: he substituted naturalness for a false and stilted dignity, passion for precision, plain homely Saxon for highly Latinized English, humour and mother-wit for apathy and sleepiness, glow and life for machinery and death."

In one of the latest of autobiographical books Lord Morley bears his witness: "He had a glorious voice, unquestioning faith and ready knowledge of apt texts of the Bible, and a deep, earnest desire to reach the hearts of the congregation, who were just as earnest in responding."

On the occasion of Mr. Thomas Spurgeon's visit to Edinburgh, Dr. Alexander Whyte wrote on May 4th, 1912: "The name of Spurgeon always thrills my heart, and that more and more the longer I live. Both personally and as a preacher I cannot put in common words all I owe to Spurgeon. And extraordinarily high as is the rank that Spurgeon holds in the estimation of multitudes, I much question if, even so, he has yet come to his own in this respect. The absolute amazing fertility of Spurgeon's pulpit and desk,

and the noble and charitable and educational movements that he began and carried on, and all steeped in the truest apostolical and evangelical spirit, all combine to place Spurgeon in the very foremost rank of our great preachers and pastors. I wish much that I could have shaken Mr. Spurgeon's hand in my honour and love to him as the son of such a father."

One of the finest tributes paid to him is in a preface by Sir William Robertson Nicoll to the little selection of Spurgeon's sermons published by Nelson. He says :

" There were hundreds of thousands who believed that they owed to him their own souls. What was said of Newman may with certain modifications be applied to him. It was he who had opened to them visions of the unseen ; it was he who sometimes half lifted the very veil of the other Country. It was he who made heaven and heavenly ministers something more than objects of faith. It was he who invested all the facts of the Christian redemption with new and entrancing certainty. It was he who made life for his disciples a more august thing in contact with him, and made them capable of higher efforts and nobler sacrifices. But even those who stood further away knew as if it was by instinct that Mr. Spurgeon was a man of the stuff of which saints are made. They knew that whoever else might sink into self-seeking or fall down before the golden image of the world, that would he never. They knew that religion was always the

prevailing and mastering idea of his life. He was one of those elect few to whom religious cares and interests are what secular cares and interests are to most men. He was self-controlled, observant, and wise, and he had a homely shrewdness and humour which were very refreshing. Mr. Spurgeon played his part well in the practical world, but his life was not there. The growth of the kingdom of grace was his prosperity; the opening of a new vein of spiritual life was his wealth. The one road to his friendship was a certain like-mindedness. This spirituality is so rare in men of great powers that it is invariably the way to influence. It inspires a kind of awe. Men bow before it, feel themselves in the presence of the eternal world, think wistfully of their own state, and are touched for a moment at least by a certain sense of wonder and regret."

How much further the influence of the name went in the minds of some to whom it was but a name may be imagined from an incident which Thomas Spurgeon recounts. He says:

"Being doomed, through a blunder, to wait at a railway station for an hour, I got into conversation with a young man. The prevailing fog served as an opening topic, and I was able to assure him, since he had never been in London, that this was a mere mist, unworthy the dignity of being called a fog. My companion asked me if I believed in fate; I answered that I believed in a good and wise God. Then the young man told

me of an atheist, who often spake with him, and had expressed the conviction that he, too, would ere long think with him (the which may God forbid !). ' He tells me,' said the young man, ' that he believes Jesus was a good man, but nothing more.' ' Well,' said I, ' you know how to answer that. Tell him that Jesus claimed to be God, and that if He was not God He was not good.' ' Well, but,' rejoined my friend, ' he says there have been other men as good as Jesus—*Spurgeon for instance !*' I have on more than one occasion had to conceal emotion, so I managed to keep an unmoved face. But I felt the more, and I replied, ' Ah ! but you should remind him that Spurgeon would not for a moment have suffered himself to be compared to Jesus, and that he believed most firmly that Jesus of Nazareth was the unblemished Lamb of God.' "

That of course was a vulgar and almost blasphemous estimate, but Spurgeon himself bore a true witness that is almost overwhelming in its spiritual implication, and I should fancy unmatched in the history of any other man. On Monday, May 26th, 1890, he said in the Tabernacle at a prayer meeting : " How many thousands have been converted here ! There has not been a single day but what I have heard of two, three or four having been here converted : and that not for one, two, or three years, but for the last ten years ! ! "

This is the name that Thomas Spurgeon and

his brother Charles bore. It was an inestimable privilege, but it was even more a severe handicap. With such a heritage life was almost certain to assume a bias. He was almost certainly destined to be a preacher, and when he became a preacher was sure to be compared, and compared unfavourably, with his father. It was as difficult for him to grow up naturally as for an heiress to discover whether she is loved for herself or only sought for her money. He might so easily have grown up a prig or a pretender, and he was neither, for never was a man more truly humble and more really sincere. The name helped him and it hindered him. At the beginning he had the good sense to see that it was his name that carried him into the favour of the people. He writes from Australia to his father, who had expressed some fears on his account: "I do not think that I am being either lionized or idolized in the true sense of the term. The attention paid to me and the interest taken by the great majority is out of pure Christian love to the honoured name of Spurgeon and the honoured man who bears it."

He would be the first to give his father the long precedence. He honoured him above all men, because he honoured God most. "My father's God!" he said. "I want to see Him as father saw Him, with eyes opened by the Holy Spirit's touch, and to speak with Him as friend speaketh with his friend. Among the few treasures I possess which once belonged to my dear sire, I have a staff on which he used to lean, a walking-stick which often helped him on the road, and some-

times even on the platform. But, thank God, I own another staff, which he too rejoiced in, my God and his, on whom he leaned in days of persecution and distress, and illness and weakness. How hard he leaned none but he and his Helper know. 'I will exalt him' by leaning on Him as dear father did, I will exalt 'my father's God' by preaching the self-same truths my father preached, by passing on the message that was on his lips almost to the latest day. I would rather that my lips were sealed than that they should attempt to preach another gospel."

The nearest parallel to the history of the father and son is in the history of the two Jonathan Edwards, father and son, both of them preachers, both presidents of a college. In that case it is more difficult to say which was the greater, though the man whom God used to begin the New England revival no doubt excelled his son. In this case, while both are great, it is no disparagement to the son to say that the father was much greater. Thomas Spurgeon built two Tabernacles, one in New Zealand, and the other at Newington Butts. Both are in the same style as the Tabernacle his father built, but both are smaller, though the second is larger than the first. Thomas Spurgeon was built on the same plan as his father, but he was not so spacious: yet he greatened with the years, and even had he not been known as a Spurgeon he would have been loved and honoured as a man.

In later years he felt that the honour of the name was in his keeping, and sometimes when his

own generous heart might have led in one direction he feared, and rightly feared, to compromise the testimony his father had borne. He had not only to ask what would his father have done, but what other people might think his father would have done, and he was willing, on occasion, to suffer reproach rather than even run the risk of smirching the name. To the end he kept the flag flying and kept it mast high.

A stranger who had never seen him before once greeted him and called him by his name, and when Thomas Spurgeon asked him how he knew him the stranger gave as answer, "Your name is written on your forehead." It was also written on his heart and in his life.

CHAPTER II

THE SPURGEON ERA

Mr. Asquith in the "*Romanes Lecture*" for 1918 on *Some Aspects of the Victorian Age*, in his masterly review of that period was only able to devote a few sentences to Church affairs. "I may say nothing to-day about the religious aspect of the matter. The rise and fall of Tractarianism; the fears and the hopes aroused by the Roman Catholic propaganda and the so-called Papal Aggression; the powerful influence of that remarkable set of personalities who were rather crudely grouped as 'The Broad Church'; the sway of the Preachers, such as Robertson at one extreme and Spurgeon at the other (for the Victorians were a church-going and chapel-going people): all these are topics which an historian of the Age will have to sort into due proportions and perspective."

As a contribution to that study it may be suggested that a distinct religious epoch was covered by the two Spurgeon ministries; an Era beginning about the same time as the Victorian Age, perhaps a little later, and continuing longer; an Era distinguished by spiritual uprising and by ecclesiastical reform, marked off by the war and

destined to give place to a new Era in the days of peace that are to come.

The two Spurgeon ministries may, for this purpose, be taken as one. The influence of C. H. Spurgeon was undoubted. Mr. Asquith, though placing him second, would no doubt give him the premier place so far as influence on the multitude is concerned. Thomas Spurgeon faithfully carried on the tradition, and his years saw the outworking of the forces of his father's time.

That his father associated his son's ministry with his own is clear enough from occasional references which, sometimes unconsciously, revealed his inner mind. Several of these will be quoted in subsequent chapters. Here it will be enough to refer to two sermons and one letter.

In a sermon on "The True Apostolical Succession" we find this passage: "How many there are in our midst who have been raised up by God to fill similar positions in the Church to those which their forefathers occupied! I hope there will always be a family succession in the eldership and in the deaconship and, what if I were egotistical enough to say so, in the ministry too. I would to God there might be in every single position of the Church, as soon as one dies, another allied to and descended from the departed to take his place."

Another passage even more definite occurs in a sermon on "Now: a Sermon for Young Men and Women": "It may not be my honour to be succeeded in this pulpit by one of my sons, greatly as I would rejoice if it might be so; but at least

I hope they will be here in this church to serve their father's God; and to be regarded with affection by you for the sake of him who spent his life in your midst."

To his son himself, in a letter dated August 26th, 1887, he opens his heart: "I awoke this morning saying to myself," he writes, "'If Tom could live here I should die happy, for I should drop the reins into his hands.' Now I am not going to drop them so far as I can see, but it shows that I was dreaming of you as a successor."

If the son's ministry had remained alone we might scarcely be justified, in spite of his father's judgment, in considering it as part of the same Era, but it is a remarkable fact that though C. H. Spurgeon had passed, so far as the speaking of the Message was concerned (and it may here be noted that he died at an age four years younger than his son), the publication of his sermons continued all along the course of his son's ministry. Both ended together, and the sixty-three volumes of sermons that have been issued in regular succession since 1855 (the last volume not quite completed) are the milestones on the way. Never in the world's history has there been such a record. In the original form the sermons have been circulated to the extent of over 105,000,000, and they have been reprinted in countless ways and in many languages. Mr. Charles Spurgeon, like his brother, has also ministered the word during these years, but he is now devoting himself to the care of his father's Orphanage, so the Spurgeon ministry, in a very real sense, may be thought of as a thing of

the past, ceasing with the end of the publication of *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.*

When the last sermon was published, a remarkable article appeared in *The Times*, part of which may be reproduced not only as a tribute to the preacher, but as an estimate of the Era the sermons represent:

"The publishers have announced that for the present they have terminated the weekly publication of Mr. C. H. Spurgeon's sermons. The series began in January, 1855, and every week since that date a sermon by the great Baptist preacher has been published. They provide a contribution to homiletic literature from a single preacher of unprecedented extent and of quite special significance.

"It is instructive to observe that, since the preachers of each age have spoken in the language of their times, few things help us better to judge religious life and thought in any period than the sermons of its popular divines. The homely style of Latimer gave place to the conceits of Andrewes and Donne, to be succeeded by the ornate splendour of Jeremy Taylor, who in turn gave place to the massive thought of Barrow, to be followed by the flowing style of men like Tillotson, and then by philosophers like Butler, and from each we learn much of the days in which they lived. The Nonconformist and Puritan divines were often preachers of great power; and Baxter, Owen, Bunyan, and Howe not only give vivid expression to their conception of the faith, they match the needs and aspirations of their fellows. John

Wesley and Whitefield began a new era in preaching, appealing directly to those who were outside the ministrations of both Church and Nonconformity. Since their day English preachers have striven to give their ministry a directly popular aim, while the names of men like Newman, F. D. Maurice, Robertson of Brighton, Liddon, R. W. Dale, Maclaren, and C. H. Spurgeon remind us of preachers whose message has challenged the consciences as well as appealed to the minds of modern Englishmen of the most varied religious experience. Among the preachers of the nineteenth century, and remarkable men are to be numbered among them, Spurgeon has a special place. He was from the first identified with militant Nonconformity.

"In character, thought, religious experience, speech, and, we may add, appearance, Spurgeon was typical of the Nonconformity of the lower middle class sixty or seventy years ago. A keen student of human nature, thoroughly alive to the motives by which men are influenced, he was an acute experimental psychologist, able without any finesse to make his direct appeal to the consciences of men in the terms which they could at once understand. Though he had considerable intellectual gifts he was not a man of any wide culture. He had never been at a college and was a self-educated man, but he had read diligently in various fields of religious literature. His knowledge of the great Puritan divines was extensive and accurate. And Spurgeon could always bring all his powers into action. He was hindered by no

hesitations of self-consciousness, no misgiving as to the value of what he had to say, no doubt as to the needs of his hearers; for he was entirely certain that his message had come to him from Heaven, and that he was bidden to deliver it by the power of the Divine Spirit for the conversion of his fellow-men.

"The results justified his confidence. Almost from the first crowds flocked to hear him. The chapel which had been almost empty when he became its pastor was soon far too small for the congregations, and while it was being enlarged he migrated to Exeter Hall. The interest he excited there was so widespread that as a consequence Sunday evening services were begun in St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, where they have been continued ever since. When Exeter Hall was no longer available Spurgeon preached to huge congregations in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall, and it is claimed thousands of conversions took place. At last the great Metropolitan Tabernacle was built in Newington; and there until his last illness and death, in 1892, Spurgeon retained a congregation of about 7,000 people who flocked to hear him twice every Sunday.

"It is not to be wondered at that Spurgeon was for a time a butt of ridicule. There was much which at first glance seemed to invite it. His appearance, his manner in the pulpit, his humour, his homeliness of speech made him an easy prey to the caricaturist; even his undoubted success became a cause of offence to unfriendly critics. He was described as 'a clerical poltroon,'

presuming to indulge in 'arrogant declamation to the Deity,' offering prayers 'most profanely familiar.' One religious journal which might have been expected to show more sympathy stated, 'Solemnly do we express our regret that insolence so unblushing, intellect so feeble, flippancy so ostentatious, and manner so rude should, in the name of religion and in connection with the Church, receive the acknowledgment of even a momentary popularity.' But the real power and worth of Spurgeon made itself felt. In the course of time men of wide experience and culture learned to appreciate his character, abilities, sincerity, and spiritual power. A man may claim to be known by his fruits; and no ministry in modern times has affected so many men of such varied experiences in every part of the world as C. H. Spurgeon's. There is something in these sermons which grips the heart and challenges the conscience; and many who never heard the preacher have read these homely but persuasive discourses almost in every corner of the world.

"Spurgeon's life and character were all of a piece. He belonged to the lower middle classes, and his ideals were theirs. The poor preacher who at first was content to supplement his pastor's pittance by teaching in a private school, when his income increased and the profits from the sale of his sermons and books enabled him to live in the comfort of a prosperous professional man, had no hesitation in using the good things of the world after the method of the class to which he belonged. There is an amusing entry in Archbishop Benson's

diary which describes a visit Spurgeon paid to him, and reports the Baptist pastor saying that—' "There are some heathen that won't give in to anything but the Word—it takes ingenuity to find the Word that will convince them. It's not the real meaning of the passage that affects them. It's the applicability of the words themselves to their particular case." So he talked on, the Antiquus Ego was ever before his eyes. But he made us all like him very much, and respect the Ego which he respected, and feel that he had a very definite call by the help of it to win souls for Christ, or rather to help those souls to Christ who were sure to come one way or other. "I'm a very bad Calvinist, quite a Calvinist—I look on to the time when the Elect will be all the world." This I don't understand, I fear. He stayed nearly two hours, interesting us all much, and he drove away in a very nice brougham with two very nice *light* chestnuts, almost cream coloured, and his coachman had a very shabby hat.'

" Spurgeon's sermons are nearly always arranged according to the same plan. There are the three or four main headings with their various subdivisions, presenting repeated and direct appeals to the consciences of his hearers. But with this permanence of outline there is the greatest variety of subject. He was alive to everything that was going on around him, quick to make use of any notable event, if by that means he could give emphasis to his message. For instance, Londoners of about forty years ago will remember the way in which they were moved by the loss of many lives

in the sinking of the *Princess Alice*, a pleasure steamer which went down in the Thames. The sermon preached by Spurgeon at that time served to give the disaster a vividness of spiritual meaning which affected many. Throughout these sermons, of which millions of copies have been sold, there is constant proof that the preacher is in the closest sympathy with the people to whom he preached. He never forgot the great central verities of the Christian faith. It is true that he was a strong Baptist and a Calvinist, and would have nothing to do with liberalism in theology. But he believed that the Christ whom he preached was able to save all men. He preached with the purpose of conversion, and he succeeded to a wonderful degree.

"Spurgeon was a tireless worker, and his comparatively early death in his fifty-eighth year was caused by over-work. Yet the constant preaching which would have exhausted the powers of most strong men was but a part of his work. His sermons and numerous writings brought him considerable sums of money, which he devoted to the Pastors' College, the Stockwell Orphanage, the Colportage Association, and other works which he founded. To these he gave himself and his means without reserve. Some of his lectures to the students of the Pastors' College are to be read in four volumes of *Lectures to my Students*, and they are to be warmly commended to the candidates for the ministry of all denominations. Few books are so full of spiritual counsel to preachers and yet so thoroughly sane as these. *The Trea-*

sury of David is another work of quite special importance which we owe to Spurgeon, containing as it does a vast collection of the choicest Puritan literature on the Psalms. The publishers have met the sustained demand for Spurgeon's sermons by publishing them in volumes according to their subjects or the texts from which they were taken, or as devotional books of various kinds, so that the Spurgeon literature takes many forms.

"Spurgeon was a Puritan and a Calvinist. In so far as this is a true description of the man it would seem to declare his inability to appeal to the religious instincts and needs of the men of our time. But in fact no modern preacher has spoken so directly to men's hearts as this herald of reactionary Protestantism. The secret lay in his knowledge of God as He is revealed in the Bible, and his knowledge of men as he learned it in his own experience. To these he brought an entire devotion to his ministry in the conviction that in it he was appointed to glorify His Master and save the souls of his fellow-men. He had the Calvinist's belief in the Sovereignty of God, and the Puritan's passion for righteousness, but his humour and his sympathy saved him from the harshness of both and enabled him to commend to his hearers the Gospel which he preached with a homeliness that only served to manifest its power."

In very truth Spurgeon was a Puritan and a Calvinist—there can be no juster characterization of his qualities, and if we consider the time of his appearance, and the circumstances of his day, it

will be difficult, in the review, for any of us to doubt that it was God's Sovereign Grace that sent him, him and no other, at such an hour. It might be said that he was the product of his time, if he had not been trained so much apart from it and begun to influence his time before it had the opportunity of influencing him.

In the year that William Carey died, 1834, ten days afterwards, Spurgeon was born, just as Carey called the Church of Christ to expect great things from God, and attempt great things for God, the year after John Wesley's voice was silenced. Here is the true succession of Apostles. One age was ending and another about to begin. A Voice was needed, and God sent a man adequately fitted for the appointed task. It was the very year when new tides of spiritual power began to flow all along the coast of the Church of Christ.

In the Anglican Church the Tractarian Movement, inaugurated the previous year, had gathered such force in 1834 that the *Christian Observer* raised the cry of Romanism, and in Spurgeon's boyhood, under the leadership of Keble, Newman, and Pusey, it increased in volume and power.

In the Scotch Church the attempt to force an unpopular minister on the parish of Auchterarder, in 1834, led to a struggle for the independence of Church and State, which in 1843 impelled 470 ministers to leave the Church of St. Andrew's in Edinburgh to form the Free Church of Scotland, with such men as Chalmers, Guthrie, Candlish, Duff, and McCheyne as leaders—one of the most glorious processions in history. Spurgeon was

then nine years of age. In 1885 he wrote : " When a boy we remember the enthusiasm of the Independent congregation with which my family are connected. Certain of the Disruption men have been amongst our choicest friends, and we like to think of all they did and suffered for the truth's sake."

Another movement of a different order, yet informed by the same desire for reality and freedom, began in Ireland, and took shape amongst the Brethren at Plymouth, spreading rapidly amongst eager Evangelical folk in this country and on the Continent. Again, 1834 was a year of crisis, for it was then that J. N. Darby published his book on Christian Liberty in Preaching, and proclaimed that the Church was in ruins.

These different movements seemed to have nothing in common, seemed indeed to oppose each other like contrary currents ; the people of the time could not guess that they were all caused by the rising of the tide, which on one side of an island may flow in a direction the exact opposite of the tide on the other side of the island, though they are both part of one great impulse. The whole nation—may we not say the whole world ? —was feeling after God, and God was not forgetful of His people. One evidence of His care was that He was preparing a prophet to speak His word—a prophet who was in the desert until the time of his showing unto Israel, who then came forth, knowing well the Shepherd's Voice, and not knowing, nor caring to know the voice of strangers.

That he was part of his time, though he was not

the product of it, is seen in the harmonious developments in other directions. In 1859, five years after his ministry in London began, there came the Great Revival which has left its mark on the life of the people until this day. Nobody knows how it began: its first manifestation was in America, after a series of business failures in that country, but whether caused by them or whether they sprang from the same cause as the Revival cannot be determined. In the following year Ireland and Scotland witnessed the same phenomena accentuated by physical signs, real enough, but difficult to explain. Professor Cairns bears witness that in his young days the Christian leaders in aggressive Evangelical circles were largely the fruit of '59, and I can bear the same witness as to the north of Ireland. In the sixties the movement, shorn of its extravagances and partly bereft of its power, reached England, where it came as a sort of aftermath of Spurgeon's own ministry.

All along the course of the Spurgeon ministry such visitations of God's grace occurred, not caused by it, but not apart from it. In 1873 D. L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey came to this country. Mr. Moody, asked to state his creed, declared that it was already in print in the fifty-third of Isaiah, and Mr. Sankey sang that the search for the lost sheep was more to the mind of Christ than even the care of the ninety and nine. The evangelists had no warmer friend than the Pastor of the Tabernacle—that has already been made clear in the previous chapter.

It cannot be said that the Keswick Convention

which was the outgrowth of this Revival had the support of either Spurgeon, though both were close friends of many of its leaders. But the truth embodied in the teaching of the Convention, that holiness, like conversion, comes not by works but by faith, and that Christ can give instant deliverance from sin and constant victory over temptation, has now become almost axiomatic in Christian thinking, and was, in fact, part of the Spurgeon message.

The uprising of the Salvation Army was but a symptom of the same desire to bring Christ to the people, and to lead the people to God. It was the flowing of the tide into another bay, with a headland between, which prevented observers in either bay seeing both as one movement—that was only given to those on the headland or on the height. Spurgeon held aloof from the Army but greatly admired the zeal of both Catherine and William Booth. General Booth visited him on one occasion in the early years and sought his co-operation. With characteristic adroitness he said that he would not like to have it reported that Spurgeon had refused him the Tabernacle for a meeting, but that if Spurgeon would hold up his little finger he would ask him for it. "I did not hold up my finger," said Spurgeon to me afterwards. But he gave General Booth his hand, and in after years the General spoke in the new Tabernacle on two different occasions.

The Spurgeon Era also covers the rise of the Student Christian Movement, with the consequent missionary advance; and the great manifestation

of essential unity as seen in the memorable Edinburgh Conference. It may seem to be a far cry from the Spurgeons to Dr. John Mott—again it is only from the headland or from the height that the whole view can be seen. The essential truth is common to both of them—"I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me." Why, the very text that led Spurgeon to the light is a missionary text, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth!*" and nobody had greater sympathy with student life than he.

In Thomas Spurgeon's day there came the Welsh Revival, and when he was laid aside from preaching I could not forbear comparing him with Evan Roberts, my immediate neighbour in Leicester, since he also, once so greatly used, has been called into retirement. The greatness of both men is seen in their unspoiled temper during their forced inaction. Neither was soured by disappointment, or rendered unsympathetic toward those who held the field. Mr. Spurgeon visited Wales during the Revival time, preached in a coal-pit to some of the exuberant spirits, and was afterwards through the instrumentality of the Welsh students of the Pastors' College permitted to see a splash of the tide in the Tabernacle.

That it is no mere fancy of a friendly biographer which looks upon the sixty-three years as the Spurgeon Era may be illustrated by some words written of Dr. James Denney, by Sir William Robertson Nicoll, whom I quote again, wishing that he might even yet be induced to write the C. H. Spurgeon biography for which we still wait.

"We believe," he says concerning Denney, "that his wife, who gave him the truest and most perfect companionship, led him into a more pronounced Evangelical creed. It was she who induced him to read Spurgeon, whom he had been inclined to despise. He became an ardent admirer of this preacher and a very careful and sympathetic student of his sermons. It was Spurgeon, perhaps as much as any one, who led him to the great decision of his life—the decision to preach Christ our righteousness."

Though the great controversy of his life involved the Baptist Union, it is a satisfaction to-day to find, in the Entrance Hall of the Baptist Church House, a fine statue of the great preacher. Whatever the new age may hold for us it cannot lessen the greatness of that figure, nor lower the eternal truth he proclaimed of Christ's Deity, Lordship, Atonement and Reign.

CHAPTER III

THE TWINS

Two years after C. H. Spurgeon settled in London twin sons were born to him. They came on September 20th, 1856, to his earliest London home, 217, New Kent Road. Great was the joy in the home and in the church. The oft-repeated story that when his father heard of it he said, "Not more than others I deserve; but God hath given me more" is as apocryphal as that earlier story that Carey said to Andrew Fuller that he would go down into the mine if others would hold the ropes. No doubt both sayings would quite truly have expressed the feelings of the two men, but in both cases they are the sayings of others. In the earliest instance the foundation of the story is that Fuller wrote concerning Carey: "It was *as if* he had said, I will go down if you will hold the ropes," and in the later it was no doubt the comment of one of Spurgeon's friends who suggested that the happy father might have said so-and-so.

But there was no doubt about the boys—there they were—the elder called Charles after his father, and with a touch of humour, the younger called Thomas because he was a twin. That at any rate is the probable explanation, though the

said Tom once in Australia gave a different answer when he was asked why his father had given him that name. "Before my mother was married," he said, "her name was Thompson, so it was quite natural that I should be Son Tom."

No son was ever a fonder lover of his mother than he; his earlier letters overflow with affection for "Mudge," became indeed almost extravagant in their expressions of endearment, and he never wavered in that devotion. It was quite natural for him to reply when a superior person said to him in the after years, "You would not be where you are if you had not been your father's son," "But surely you will give my mother a little of the credit too"—an answer which stamped him more surely as his father's son than his mother's.

His father more than once said that if God honours His saints before the people, He generally takes them behind the door and gives them a whipping, and in his own case this was often true. But now the order was reversed. God sent the great joy into the home, and barely a month after sent him in public the greatest sorrow of his life. On October 19th, there arose a panic in the great congregation at the Surrey Music Hall the first time he preached there. Some thieves cried "Fire," and the frantic people rushed for the doors, seven being killed and many others injured. The preacher did much to calm their fears, but afterwards his own mind was paralysed, and the next month was spent in a state of inconsolable distress. Gradually peace of heart was given to him, and mother and children joined him at Croy-

don, where he had gone to get away from the horror that pursued him amid familiar scenes. He never quite recovered his nerve in the face of an unfamiliar crowd, but when the joy of the Lord was restored, he gratefully dedicated his twin boys, as far as in him lay, to the Lord and to His service, and the happy family returned home again.

The lads were a little more than a year old when their father preached in the Crystal Palace to the largest congregation he ever addressed, 23,654 persons, on October 7th, 1857, the national Fast-Day for the Indian Mutiny. A day or two before the service he went to the Palace to test the acoustics of the place, men being placed at various points to see if they could hear his voice. As ever, having to say something, he said something worth the saying—"Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." A workman, hearing the message unexpectedly, received it as a message from heaven, and was led to Christ by it. On the day itself the text was "Hear ye the rod and Him that hath appointed it," the congregation was deeply impressed, the Mutiny Fund benefited to the extent of £700, and Mr. Spurgeon was so exhausted that going to bed that Wednesday night he did not awake until Friday morning!!

About this time the home had been moved to Nightingale Lane, Clapham Common, then in the country, now in the busy traffic of London; and here the boys, in the fresher air, grew apace. They were of course just like other boys. Their

father was once asked "Which is the best, Charlie or Tom?" and his answer was characteristic. "Charlie is the best boy when Tom is not with him, and Tom is best when Charlie is away."

Their first education was given by a governess, and to her the earliest letter of T. S. that has been preserved is addressed. It was sent to his son Harold quite recently by a lady who says: "My dear father came across it at an old curiosity shop, and paid five shillings for it, thinking it would please me to have it: which it did." The letter, in stiff clear writing, runs:

"*May 5th*, 1866.

"MY DEAR MISS STEVENTON,

"Mamma desires me to write and say, with her kind regards, that we shall not be able to come to school all next week, as we are going out.

"I remain,

"Your affectionate pupil,

"THOMAS SPURGEON."

Then they went to a school at Lansdowne Road, Stockwell, and afterwards to Lang's School at Clapham Park. For a while afterwards they were tutored by Mr. Rylands Brown when he was a student in the Pastors' College, the boys coming down to the Tabernacle for their lessons. When at Clapham Park they might have been seen any morning running to catch Tilling's omnibus which took City men to their work in those days, four-in-hand. The conductor knew them as Spurgeon's boys, and gladly gave them a lift till his omnibus

filled up. Once Thomas missed his step and fell flat on his face, but he had spirit enough to pick himself up and get on the omnibus after all. They were fond of skating and of cricket, and Mr. Higgs bought a beautiful boat which they used to sail on the pond on the Common.

"I remember as a child," he said in a sermon, "earning sixpence from my beloved father once for sitting still for a quarter of an hour. I never found wage so hard to earn before or since. I never consented a second time to attempt such a feat at such poor rate of payment."

In another sermon this occurs—"I used to do canvas work when I was a little boy, and if I did it wrong I had to unpick it. I know I did not like that part. I would always rather do a new square. I often think how glad we should be if we could only unpick in life those squares that we have done amiss."

On Sunday evenings their mother used to take the boys aside and talk to them about the way of life, and with one each side of her at the piano sing the songs of Zion. "I like to tell," her son said years afterwards, "how she bade us sing 'There is a fountain filled with blood' and of how when she came to the chorus she used to say, 'Dear boys of mine, I have no reason to suppose that you are yet trusting Christ: you will, I hope, in answer to our constant prayers, but till you definitely do you must not say or sing "I do believe, I will believe, that Jesus died for me." It is just as wrong to sing a lie as to tell one.' Then she used to sing it by herself. Somehow or

other it did not seem to me, even in those early days, that a chorus should be sung by one voice only! Perhaps that little thought helped me to long to be able to sing it too, and the Holy Spirit wrought in my heart an earnest craving to be able to sing

> I do believe, I will believe,
> That Jesus died for me,
> That on the Cross He shed His blood,
> From sin to set me free.

Oh, how I longed for that! I remember well the bright morning when as we came to the breakfast-table, I climbed upon her seat and put my arms round dear mother's neck—I like to have them there still—and I said to her, 'Dear mother, I really think I do love Jesus.' Thank God, she took me at my word, and said to me, 'I am so glad to hear it, I believe you do.' Then I wanted Sunday night to come that I might be able to sing my loudest in the chorus. Whatever else may fade from my memory that scene is indelibly fixed there. 'I opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back.' The words were spoken into the Lord's ear. The Lord was listening, and I believe He also said, 'Dear child, I believe you do love Me.'"

His father's sister, Mrs. Page, about this time visited her brother at Nightingale Lane. She had been led to Christ by Archibald Brown's mother, but had only told two or three of her intimate friends of the change in her life. One day her nephew Tom, "then quite a little chap

in knickers, climbed on to my knee," she writes, "and putting his arms round my neck, said: 'Aunt Louie, do you love Jesus?' I said, 'Yes, Tommy,' and then came the thought that if I had thus told a little child, why should I not confess it to others, and it led me to be baptized and to join the Tabernacle Church."

Through my friend Dr. Thirtle I have come into possession of a little book bound in purple leather with the boy's name in gold on the cover. It is *The Pleasant Catechism Concerning Christ*, which was presented to him by Thomas D. Marshall, who was, if I mistake not, Newton Marshall's father. On the fly-leaf he has written the words: "He is my God . . . my father's God. I will exalt him" (Ex. xv. 2–3). Evidently Thomas learnt this Catechism for some time, for there are marks, about a page distant from each other, to mark the lessons. He went steadily through the sections, "The Person of Christ," "The Character of Christ," "The Work of Christ," but in the fourth section, "The Commands of Christ," he seems to have been arrested—it is a wonder he did not make an illustration of it in years to come. The fifth section, "The People of Christ," he does not seem to have touched.

An interesting episode occurred in the ninth year of the twins. On March 14th, 1865, at the close of a lecture by their father in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, on behalf of "The United Kingdom Band of Hope," a branch was formed at the Tabernacle, and the two boys came to the front of the platform to be enrolled as the first

two members. Mr. Selway placed the medal and ribbon round the neck of each, and asked them to address a few words to the meeting. They both made the same speech, the first public utterance for either of them: "I hope to be a teetotaller all my life." A letter of "Son Tom" is extant, dated March 1865, which will be of interest to his friends. Remember that the writer was only between eight and nine years old.

"My dear Mr. Selway,

"I am very much obliged to you for that beautiful book you gave me, and the kind way you gave me the medal. I must thank you again and again for both. It is a very nice book; I tried hard to read the preface but found the words rather difficult, but I will ask Mamma to explain them to me. I send my love to you, and hope that all your prayers and Papa's will be answered for us, and that we may grow up good men and preachers like our dear Papa. I hope to keep that book as long as I live. I will be able to look at it and will then remember what I did when I was a little boy. I was very happy in receiving the medal, and thought it was a very beautiful one, and hope to keep it a very long time. I am sure I ought to be, and am, very grateful to you. I hope that I will make a longer speech soon." The last page is in praise of his father's lecture on Candles, which he seems to have enjoyed very much; then he finishes:

"From your grateful little Friend,

"Thomas Spurgeon."

In course of time the house at Nightingale Lane was to be rebuilt, and the household moved to Brighton during the operation. The boys were sent to Camden House School there, and for three years and a half were under the care of Mr. William Oldring.

In a letter to his mother, dated "Brighton, February 20th, 1871," evidently written when his parents had returned home, he says: "Somebody sent me a love token, and as the postmark was London, S.W., I suppose I shall not be far wrong in guessing that the Somebody lives not far from Nightingale Lane." Then, referring to his mother's letter of February 14th, he adds: "Ah! but mamma, I have received something better than a valentine, something more substantial. If I could but speak to you in reality I would like to make you guess what it is—A Certificate of Approbation awarded to T. S. for good work and conduct during the week. Four weeks have slipped away and your Tommie has not been reported yet." Then, boy-like, he speaks of a holiday to be given to the school because some of the scholars had distinguished themselves in the Cambridge Local Examination, and ends in triumph by saying that there is going to be a clock put on the steeple of the school chapel, and that perhaps his father would like to contribute to it!

He and his brother were evidently set on getting money for good works early in their lives. About this time they compiled a magazine entitled *Readings for Leisure Hours*, both being editors, with Henry Olney as foreign correspondent. In the

only issue preserved, Vol. II., No. 5, April 1872, they state that they have already raised a guinea for the Pastors' College, and ask for more.

For his sixteenth birthday his mother sends him a little note. "I thank God for sparing you so long to me," she says; "and hope that I may live to see you a brave, earnest, devoted Christian man. My highest wish for you is that you may be holy."

Five other letters from his mother during the year 1873 have been carefully guarded by her son. In the first, dated February 11th, she says:

"I am not at all surprised at your elevation to the monitorship, but I pray earnestly for you that as your privileges and responsibilities increase so may your grace and wisdom, and your reliance on God. You will be thrown now, my son, into the company of elder boys of the school. Oh, I pray you, remember what the burden of my heart was the night you took leave of me at Brighton. 'Lord, keep my boys from the evil that is in the world.'

"You will hear and see and learn things from elder boys that perhaps you never dreamed of before. Oh, my darling, my precious son, turn resolutely away from everything that looks like vice or wickedness, and keep yourself pure unto the Lord. Temptation will be very strong sometimes, but cry unto God; cry mightily and He *will* deliver you. Something in my heart compels me to say this to you to-day; if you do not feel the force of it now, you will soon; so treasure up my words,

darling, and above all, trust Jesus and *dis*trust self.

"I shall be very anxious to hear what you do, and how you get on with your 'Debates.' Papa says that extempore speaking is gained only by *practice*. I could wish my boys to shine in this particular, but I must in this also learn to say 'Thy will be done.'

"God bless the prayer meeting! May it never become a mere formal service, but have loving, earnest, pleading hearts to keep it alive, and well pleasing to the Lord.

"Your loving
"MOTHER."

That this letter has been kept all these years is an indication that, as his mother wished, her words had been treasured. Which leads me to observe that while the children of good fathers often go wrong, the wise and Christian mother can generally influence her children aright, especially if they are boys.

About this time Thomas showed an aptitude for drawing, and having copied a picture of a coastguard from the *British Workman* sent it home. His mother in the same letter says:

"Your sailor is shown to nearly everybody, and they are all loud in its praise. Certainly my Tommie can have no doubt about one talent which God has given him: how many others has he? May they all be devoted to His service!"

The picture is reproduced in Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon's biography of her husband.

On March 19th his mother writes :

"I was very pleased with the pretty little drawing you sent me. I think it is excellently well done, and I am quite proud of my son. By the way, I did not know that you aspired to be a poet as well as an artist, but your verses are first-rate (except the first). Papa says so, and you know he is no mean critic.

"I want particularly to say to you that you are to be sure NOT to take drawing lessons from anybody. Last night a professional gentleman saw *my* sailor, and after praising it very highly he said, 'never let that dear boy *learn* drawing. Nature will be his best teacher, and the less he *copies* the better.' So, darling, I advise you to try your hand on all sorts of objects, for surely some day, if you wish it, you will rise to eminence in your art."

Almost a prophecy. In the next letter, written from Deal, where she was resting while her husband was exploring the beauties of the New Forest, Mrs. Spurgeon quotes a long description of the forest scenery from one of her husband's letters, and ends with : "There, dear boys, is not that a fine description ? that simple language Papa uses, and yet how forcible ! One can almost see the scenes he pictures."

The last school letter is to sympathize with her

boy in a disappointment, and his mother gives him a very sound bit of advice, as well as good cheer:

"Don't be discouraged. I am most truly sorry for you, for it seems hard, after having tried your best, but another time, if I were you, I would tackle the most difficult part of any task FIRST, and then, that once mastered, all the rest would be comparatively easy. For instance, if you had begun with the fourteenth proposition and conquered *it* you would have been sure to have succeeded with the others, and this misfortune would not have befallen you. Your Papa says this is the right way, and he hopes his boy will follow it. He, too, is sorry for you, but bids you to be of good courage."

The brothers were chums all along their school life, and both were avowed Christians. It was no infrequent thing for them to be discovered distributing their father's sermons along the Parade at Brighton, and, as we have seen, they took the lead in a prayer meeting at the school. In honour they preferred one another. Mrs. Barker, the wife of the minister at Hastings, was once calling on Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon, and "on being shown into the room was attracted by a pile of handsome books on the table, which she found on inspection were prizes awarded to 'Master Thomas Spurgeon.' In a few moments the owner entered, evidently sent to entertain the caller until his mother was free to appear, and she remarked to him that she was looking at his beautiful prizes.

At once he replied, ' Oh, but let me show you my brother Charlie's prizes. Aren't they nice ? ' and took her to another pile. The act of the boy in seeking to draw my attention from himself to his brother was so beautiful, I felt that his disposition was delightful, and that he must become a great and good man." The correspondent who supplies the incident adds : " When later on I had the honour of calling him friend, I proved a hundred times how the boy was father to the man. He never desired great things for himself, but was content ' to fill a little space ' in man's estimation, that Christ might be glorified."

School days over it became a question what was to become of the boys, and the outcome of the discussion was that Charles started on a career as a merchant in the office of Messrs. Frith Sands and Co., in Broad Street, and Thomas as an artist in the office of Mr. William Holledge, wood-engraver, in Fetter Lane, and both of them were in a fair way of prospering when the call came to devote themselves to the ministry of the Word of God.

It is difficult to understand why their parents, with such a high sense of the value of learning, did not give their sons the opportunity of a University career. A hint of the reason may be found in the letter from their mother when she exhorts Tom not to let anybody teach him drawing. Deep down in the hearts of both father and mother there was, I believe, a sort of intuitive faith that their sons would preach the Gospel, and they determined that God's Spirit and Nature (though

I am not quite sure whether any distinction should be drawn between the two) should suffice for their equipment. Meanwhile they were to know the world they lived in, and the men amongst whom they would have to labour.

There was another reason if we search deep enough to find it. Those who know the father's story will remember how in his early days he thought of applying for entrance to Regent's Park College, and in the house of Mr. Macmillan at Cambridge waited for an interview with Dr. Angus, who in another room, owing to the stupidity of a servant, was waiting for him. Going across the Common, disappointed, the Word of the Lord came to him, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not," the words of Jeremiah to Baruch in the olden days, the words which Bishop Ken wrote in two books that he had constantly in use:—"*Et tu quæris tibi grandia? Noli quærere.*" Knowing his father and some of his deep thoughts, I think that he deliberately faced the problem for his boys as well as for himself. "Seekest thou great things for thy sons? seek them not." Perhaps he may have been less than just to them, but he was ever more than kind, and he had faith that God who called and equipped him would do as much for them. Nor was his faith disappointed.

The boys joined the church at the Tabernacle when they were eighteen years of age. On September 20th, 1874, their father preached on the text "I and the children," and the next evening he baptized them both. The right hand of fellow-

ship with the Church was theirs on October 4th, and the motto given to them—a motto they never forgot—was "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price."

They soon got to work for Christ, though it was in quite an unconventional way. Near their home a gardener, Mr. Rides, had begun informal services in his own house, 12, Swaby Road, and the brothers soon joined him. Charles was first enlisted, and he brought Thomas; they preached in turn, and the rooms soon became too small for the people who wished to attend; it then became necessary to seek larger premises. No doubt the name of Spurgeon was an attraction. Bolingbroke Chapel was built in 1877, and the work grew until it became the foundation of the present Northcote Road Baptist Church.

But in the very thick of the early success Tom discovered that God had for him another way: before the year was out he was in Australia, and at one of his great meetings there he said that he had not been frightened at the services he was called to conduct, for when at home he was accustomed to hold, in a gardener's cottage, a children's service in the morning and one for adults in the evening.

"It is nearly twenty-seven years ago," he said in a Tabernacle sermon when he was Pastor of that Church, "since I preached from this text (2 Kings iii. 16) for the first time, in the little mission where I first began to dig for Jesus. I tried to urge the people to make the valley full of ditches, and I have lived long enough to see

the whole of that valley—for it was literally a valley—not only filled with population, but filled, as I believe, with earnest Christian work and workers; I bless God that the little one has become a thousand, for God has made it to prosper. We little thought of such results those years ago."

That was the preparation for all the service that was to follow. He illustrated it from his own experience, in an address to the students of the Pastors' College, twenty years afterwards. "If, when I began to learn the art of wood-engraving, my teacher had let me start away with the graver and scooper and tint tool at one of his best blocks, he would have had his picture spoiled for one thing, and I should never have mastered the art. Therefore he set me to single lines and facsimile work, then to cross-hatching and to various simple tints. One thing I remember on which he laid great stress—too much stress to please me at the time; he would have me learn well how to sharpen my tools. That was sharp on his part, but I myself should have been a poor tool if I could not sharpen my instrument."

The earliest letter to him from his father that has been preserved is dated Mentone, December 5th. It has been twelve times folded and evidently carried for a long time in the boy's pocket.

"My dear Son Tom," it says, "I hope the engraving business is becoming an easy matter with you. God bless you, my boy, and prosper you for this life: but yet more for the life to come. Work as steadily in both spheres of service; to

neglect either would be like tying up one of your hands or one of your feet. God is glorified in the shop and in the pulpit. May you see good results in both directions! I pray for you in relation to the two. I hope Bolingbroke does not get empty through the cold and wet. I must help you there. Kiss your dear mother, and try and tell her how dear she is to us all three. Our angel and delight, is she not? With much love,

"Your affectionate father,

"C. H. S."

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST VOYAGE

But another way was opening than either father or son intended. The first inkling of it is to be found in the next letter from father to son that has been preserved. It was written from Mentone on a Monday, but is undated, save only that the year 1877 is added in the son's writing. There are things in it that need not be quoted: the pregnant paragraphs are as follows:

"My dear Son Tom,

"I am very sorry that you are feeling so weak, and as your dear Mother thinks a voyage would do you good I cannot but yield to the wish. I am rather afraid that it will be too severe a remedy, but I shall not demur to its being tried. If it ends in your going in for the College course and coming into the ministry I shall not regret it; indeed, I shall rejoice if you went round the world seven times if it ended so.

"You will preach, I am sure, but without good training you cannot take the position which I want you to occupy. Theology is not to be learned in its amplitude and accuracy by one destined to be

a public instructor without going thoroughly into it, and mastering its terms and details. Perhaps a voyage may give tone to your system and prepare you for two years of steady application. Only may the Lord make you a great soul-winner, and I shall be more than content.

"We meet some awful donkeys when travelling, but a lady at San Remo is beyond all others. She said she regretted that our Lord Jesus was a Jew. When asked if she would have preferred his being an Englishman she replied, 'No, but you see it is such a pity that he was a Jew: it would have been far better if he had been a Christian like ourselves'!!

"Your loving father,
"C. H. SPURGEON."

Arrangements were made for him to sail with Captain Jenkins, a Christian seaman, in the three-masted schooner *Lady Jocelyn*. He was accompanied by the son of the artist to whom he had been apprenticed, and the two "Toms" set out on their voyage on Friday, June 15th, 1877. His father had warned him that "life on a ship was like going to prison, with the added chance of being drowned," but he seems to have taken the risk gaily. Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon happily preserved the frequent and lengthy letters her son sent home; sometimes it is the boy who speaks and sometimes the man, always the son. This should be remembered when the following extracts are read.

"Speaking to the steward we found the pilot

would leave us to-night and then we should be left indeed, so 'what thou doest do quickly' floated across my mind. The next moment a pen was seized, and here I am writing. The *Black Prince* has us in tow and the ripple of three small boats astern makes splash-dash music.

"Captain Jenkins has just come alongside me and wants to be kindly remembered to Ma and Pa. 'Would she like the portrait of the ship?' was readily answered in the affirmative, and here it is with her husband (the Captain) and the facetious remark that a ship is in love when attached to a buoy.

"We have, I think, sixteen sheep and any quantity of fowls and ducks. Poor things, they have close quarters indeed. It will be kindness to eat some of them to give the others more room.

"Loneliness has scarcely troubled me yet. A kind of wonderment and a restful trust in God is what I feel.

. . . .

"*Saturday morning.*—Our doctor is a very young man on his first voyage, so I am going to be ready to doctor him. A lady last evening mistook me for this important individual and gave me quite a lecture as to my duties in attending to her. As I told you the Captain introduced me to her by saying I would look after her, I was not surprised at first when she spoke of my responsibilities, but when she said that of course I should be wanted day and night, and so on, I opened her eyes and my mouth by telling her I was not the doctor.

She seemed rather bewildered, and apologized for the mistake.

. . . . .

"*Saturday afternoon, June 16th, 77.*—My greatest friend as yet is Mr. Keen of Croydon. I believe him to be a Christian man, and doubt not I shall get on with him swimmingly. He asked me this morning about services on board. I told him I hoped to have the opportunity of speaking, at which he greatly rejoiced, being especially glad to hear that the Captain was a godly man. It seems that since that he has spoken to the Captain about it, and he in turn has spoken to me. He said that he would leave the matter entirely in my hands. He would not think of reading prayers—'Just do it in your own way,' was the advice he gave me, 'and we shall be very pleased.' What a chance to serve the Master! What a responsibility in so doing! Oh, that He may even guide me in this also, and give me acceptable words, and then help me to practise what I preach! I have made up my mind, God helping me, not to be discouraged at the result of the first meeting, whatever it may be."

. . . . .

The next morning at half-past six off Portland Bill, he writes to his brother, sending loving messages to him and to the little meeting in which they were both so deeply interested. "I have been thinking of the verse:

> All scenes alike engaging prove
> To souls impressed with sacred love;
> Where'er they dwell they dwell in Thee,
> In heaven, in earth, or on the sea;

and glad indeed it makes me to know that the place where men ought to worship is here and there and everywhere. God bless the Mission Room is my constant prayer. Seek God as your helper. Remember He is the Great and Good Shepherd and you are co- or sub-pastor. Give my Christian love to all of the people. I hope they'll like their new House and send many a prayer from it to the old ship.

"Good-bye, dear home and country! Farewell, sweet mother and loving friends! I cannot help tears just now: still, I think they are tears of joy as well as of sadness, an eye full of each, for God is good and always will be."

. . . . .

On Tuesday evening June 19th, 1877, another letter was written to his mother in which he says that owing to lack of wind they were still in sight of Land's End. "Sunday was a glorious day. I was up before five endeavouring to get a sermon, and the whole day was anxious because we were unable to have the service till seven o'clock. Tom and myself are the only dissenters on board, but the Captain would have none of the Church service. The ladies willingly consented to help in the singing, and altogether it passed off pretty well. I shall feel more at home shortly."

. . . . .

It is a simple, wholesome, modest, unspoiled personality that is revealed in these letters, but withal a person sure of himself, and fixed in his

purpose, looking out on life unafraid, with a conscious sense of God's presence. The next letter, written during the voyage, consists of no less than twenty-two four-page sheets, eighty-eight pages in all—something like a letter that, to come into a mother's hand. It was commenced on August 13th, finished on September 1st, is addressed to "My dear Parents," and at the head of the first sheet there is an index of nine topics—"I have done this so that you can begin where you think you will be most interested," he writes. Perhaps the reader will think it was an Index of the Coming Man. There is of course only space here for a few descriptive sentences.

"I have at no time been at a loss for anything to do, and the monotony of life on board certainly does not equal that of hurrying to the city in the morning to peck all day, and returning weary night after night."

He records with thankfulness that he has not been sea-sick at all: "I was looked upon with wonder, sometimes with envy, while day after day morning querists would ask me if I still felt quite the thing. Unable to say what the length of the voyage may be, I can only say that I have no desire for its completion." Several pages are given to a realistic description of his fellow-passengers; then there comes an inventory of his own quarters.

"Cabin No. 5 for some time had a notice over the door which bore in red letters the announcement that it was engaged by Mr. T. Spurgeon and friend. Mr. T. Spurgeon and friend were not

sorry to fulfil their part of the engagement, but soon found that, the space being somewhat limited, it was rather too much of a full fill. It was therefore in a most friendly way that I parted with my friend's company on the fourth night, he removing to the next apartment, the two being connected by a door.

" Of course it was something to do to set my room in order, for as it stood it looked anything but inviting. My first attempts at house-furnishing have been remarkably successful. This is owing possibly to the facts that the house was not extensive and that there has been plenty of time for alterations and improvements. These have been effected from time to time as weather or inclination suggested. No. 5 Starboard Street is next door to the residence of Captain Jenkins, whose high reputation among Australian travellers is so well-known. Thus the neighbourhood is aristocratic. This charming sea-side residence is delightfully situated on the edge of the ladies' boudoir, and has in consequence a curtained entrance. Somebody, too, seems to have said to the carpet, ' Thus far but no farther shalt thou go.' Walking in I find my apartment can boast two posts, two doors, two bunks," and so it goes on for two pages more, followed by an equally admirable description of the saloon. The playful tone is evidence of renewed health.

Quite clever accounts of the wonders of the ocean follow on page after page. Note this—" Now and then the rainbow arched itself completely, and gazing at it we suddenly became impressed with

the necessity of preparing for the worst. Soon the rain reached us, and, as we stood on the companion ladder, we looked westward to see the sun for a few minutes only tinging the rain-smitten waters with a marvellous green. I never saw so magical an effect. The ocean for a time stood dressed in living green, and it required no stretch of imagination to fancy that we were speeding past fertile meadows. How it made us long to go for a walk!" Here is surely both the eye and the touch of the artist.

"Father will be glad to hear," he writes, "that the promise I gave respecting theological works was by no means forgotten. You too will be pleased to learn that shorthand received due attention." In fact they had a shorthand class on deck every morning. "Nor have I been idle in the Art department. I scarcely know how many charts I drew. I also produced two pictures. . . . Besides these I began a block of the *Lady Jocelyn*, but bad weather prevented its completion."

Each Sunday of the voyage Mr. Spurgeon preached. On the third Sunday out, which was spent in the Tropics, he determined to have two services. Sunday, July 15th, is recorded as the happiest Sabbath spent on board. "Both meetings were better attended than ever, and in the evening there were nearly sixty persons present. When you remember that there were so many Roman Catholics, a band of men on the watch, and those who preferred sleep to service, besides several absentees through sickness, you will see that this was a most encouraging audience. I

bless the Lord for inclining them to come, for making them so wonderfully attentive, and for aiding me in speaking. I spent nearly the whole day in making sure of my sermons, for I preach without notes, one reason being that at night we are obliged to turn the lights down on account of the heat."

"July 29th was about our roughest Sunday. With little wind to steady the ship the rolling was very considerable and very inconvenient. Especially so during service, for it was difficult for some to retain their seats and for me to retain my post. It was not easy either to sustain the thread of the discourse, for swinging trays and an audience 'moved' in anything but a desirable way are not conducive to retention of ideas or expression of thoughts. That evening our largest congregation met, and best of all the Lord was there.

"I did what I could to follow up remarks in sermon in conversation afterwards, only regretting that I found myself less fitted to speak with one or two." This paragraph I note with interest, for years ago in Scotland his father, in an intimate talk, made exactly the same confession. Is there heredity in such things?

On August 28th the voyage ended.

Only a parent's heart can know with what eagerness the news of the arrival of the ship bearing such a precious cargo was awaited at Nightingale Lane, but something of it may be guessed by the fact that the following letter was written only two days after the passengers landed at Melbourne. It is under such circumstances

that the blessings of telegraphy can be truly understood.

August 30th, 1877.

"MINE OWN DEAR SON,

"We have all been delighted to hear of the arrival of the *Lady J.* at Melbourne, for we hope that it means that our Tom is all right. By this time you will have had enough sea, and when this reaches you I hope you will have found that 'the barbarous people have showed you no little kindness.'

"I have had a very loving and pressing invitation to come out, but how can I leave home? I shall have to write and decline for I am anchored here too fast, but I feel very grateful for the loving invitation and wish that I could accept it.

"Give them the Gospel. Study all you can, preach boldly and let your behaviour be with great discretion, as indeed I am sure it will be.

"You will be a man ere this reaches you: may the Lord give you full spiritual manhood. We shall try to keep your birthday and Charlie's, and I must invest something great in the way of presents for your majority. This must be placed round the neck of the fatted calf when you return.

"Char is to come into the College in September. He will have a little start of his brother: but he managed that at an early period, and I suppose you must put up with it. The Bolingbroke Chapel is paid for and will be a blessing, I hope. The people want their co-pastor back, and so do I.

" You will, I trust, find the Lord open up ways and means for you to see the country and do good and get good. I am all right: full of work and in pretty good force for doing it. The Lord bless thee, my son, and keep thee, and be ever thy guide. Live to Him, and you will be better than great. Thy father's blessing rests upon thee.

" Your ever loving Father,

" C. H. SPURGEON."

Later, his father remarked in view of his son's ministry on board this ship: " Evidently God was teaching his youthful hands to war, and his fingers to fight, in anticipation of future battles. Three months' preaching to the same audience amid the rolling of the sea is an admirable preparation for addressing crowds on shore."

Evidently his son agreed with this opinion, for in his preface to his volume *Down to the Sea* he says:

" I have always loved the sea. Ships and sailors have had a wonderful charm for me ever since I sailed my boat on the Clapham Long Pond and read Mr. Kingston's stories of adventure. I may as well confess that there was a time when I cherished a secret longing for a life on the ocean wave. When in 1877, under doctor's orders, I voyaged to the Antipodes, I eagerly hailed the opportunity for actual acquaintance with the sea and its sons. A godly captain and a steady crew, agreeable passengers and a happy combination of weather —good, bad, and indifferent—provided for me a most interesting and instructive trip. I tried to keep my eyes and ears open, and to act on Captain

Cuttle's advice—'When found, make a note of.' I little guessed at the time to what good use nautical knowledge might be put. Not the least of my joys on board the good ship *Lady Jocelyn* was the preaching of the Word. In saloon and fo'csle I was privileged to tell the story of the Cross. I soon got to know the seamen well, and to admire much in them. They were very good to their 'sky pilot.' Since then I have had an increasing interest in seafaring men. . . . I confess to a weakness to pictures. I ploughed the boxwood with my graver before I ploughed the seas in a ship. If woodcuts seem to detract from the dignity of a volume of sermons, what matters it if they add to its usefulness?

"How well I remember when I set sail for the other side of the world. I was somewhat of a novice myself as to seafaring matters, but I was nevertheless not a little surprised when one more ignorant than I came to me as we were abreast of the Lizard. The sun was setting, and we were taking our last view of dear old England. Looking up to the spread of canvas my fellow-passenger exclaimed, 'I suppose they will take the sails down presently?' I said, 'Do you mean that they will *furl* them?' For I was determined to let him see that I knew a little of nautical terms even then. 'Yes,' he said, 'I suppose they will take them down by-and-bye.' 'But,' I said, 'why?' 'Well,' he answered, 'the sun is setting; it will be dark soon.' 'My good fellow,' I replied, 'we shall take twelve weeks to get to Melbourne probably if we sail day and night, but what a

voyage it will be if we sail only while the sun shines!' "

To his mother, in a letter overflowing with affection, the son wrote words which must have set her heart singing. Remember, the sentences were meant for her eyes alone, and were written by her boy. " Tom thinks he has helped to serve his Master by a consistent life as well as by preaching, though he mourns his imperfections. I won't ask you to pray for me. You always do. Pray harder though. Just now I ask that I may be kept *humble* and near to Jesus."

CHAPTER V

THE AUSTRALIAN VISIT

When Thomas Spurgeon landed in Australia it was not with the idea of a preaching tour, but with the intention of continuing his work as an engraver. In bidding good-bye to Victoria he told the people that "when he got to Melbourne he had meant to set up in business if he did not return by the same ship. Like Paul he was not ashamed to earn his living with his hands. Wisely his father had given him a trade, and he would not object to drawing a sketch for their illustrated paper."

But his father in giving him a letter of introduction had added the words—"he can preach a bit," and the Australians were not slow to take the hint. From Geelong, where he first went, in an early letter to his father which reveals the spirit in which he started, he says: "Mr. Bunning is a right good fellow, so thoughtful and so kind. I did not intend preaching on my first Sunday ashore, but as I expected to be at Ballarat next Sabbath, I seized perhaps my only opportunity of helping our dear brother. We had a grand time; the beautiful chapel was crowded and God was in the place. Dear Father, I believe I have the way open to many hearts in this colony. I have seen

them weep when I spoke. I suppose because of the recollections that are raised. God give the youthful mind prudence and discretion! Mr. Bunning says he thinks there will always be manifested a leniency toward the young man as to criticism, and he has given me kind advice in various matters, telling me that from last Sunday's service he is sure I need not mind facing any audience. Confidence in God is the great thing, but I think a certain amount of self-confidence is also necessary."

Many details of the visit are available in the letters which, covering a whole year, he wrote to his mother, most of them lengthy, five of them fifteen sheets long (that is sixty pages), and also in a scrap-book containing newspaper comments which he evidently kept with scrupulous care. Perhaps it may be as well to take the public appreciations first, and afterwards to turn to the intimate correspondence.

His first sermon passed unnoticed, but the second drew forth the comment in *The Ballarat Courier* that "the young gentleman had studied his subject well, and possessed qualifications which might make him in the future a finished and eloquent speaker." But *The Stawell Chronicle* the next week only said, "Mr. Spurgeon is earnest, and that earnestness makes him impressive, but he does not seem to possess any of those gifts which have raised his father to so high a position." However *The Southern Cross* the same week was a little more encouraging: "Young Spurgeon does not possess the fire and dash of his father,

but he has much originality, humour and force." *The Bendigo Advertiser* ten days later: "Mr. Spurgeon is a very young man; he possesses great confidence and good command of language, and earnestness," which *The Bendigo Evening News* echoes by saying, "He may well be called the boy preacher; still, he possesses great oratorical powers and not less confidence." One might almost hazard a suggestion that these two critiques came from the same pen.

The East Charlton Tribune ten days later says something worthier: "While listening to the son one could detect in the grand conceptions and the clear and lucid manner in which the subject of the text was explained, the master hand of the father, and no doubt the thought was more than once expressed that day by a youthful listener, 'Would I had such a father,' and by a fond parent, 'Would I had such a son.'"

The Methodist Journal of November 30th: "Crowds attend to hear him preach, and the impression produced is decidedly in his favour. He is quite at his ease in the presence of the largest assembly. He speaks deliberately, distinctly, with considerable force and animation, and his voice enables him to be heard in a capacious building. Mr. Spurgeon has made a good start (would that thousands of our young men would follow suit), and as years and experience are given him, we shall be surprised if the pardonable crudities of youth do not give place to the development of a vigorous style, a good intellectual grasp and a liberal measure of originality."

THE SPURGEON SONS: TWENTY-ONE YEARLY PICTURES.

A week later *The Advertiser* of Moonta says: "He has found himself welcomed for his father's sake and liked for his own." *The Port Augusta Dispatch* is pedantic enough to draw attention to his pronunciation of "Saviour," "before," and "fear," which it says he pronounced as "Saviah," "befoah," and "feah." *The Beanpip* (what a name for a newspaper !) of Gawler, early in January, 1878, says, "His manner and delivery were very easy and graceful and his self-possession remarkable for one so young." *The Methodist Journal* gives him a leading article on January 18th. "He has his father's sincerity and earnestness, his simplicity of aim, and not a little of his humour and mother-wit. Though youthful he has the balance and control of an older man, and we are thankful that the son of Charles H. Spurgeon so becomes his noble father." *The Launceston Examiner* in April says, "Mr. Spurgeon is but a young man, but promises to make a powerful speaker." So the criticism runs.

Wherever he went he had crowds: his sermons were often reported at considerable length, his platform speeches were amusing, and we find him now and again not only reciting such pieces as "The Leper," but actually singing in a duet. On his birthday, when he attained his majority, he was presented with a gold watch at Geelong, and on leaving South Australia in January for Tasmania, a handsome Emu inkstand in frosted silver, which yet graces the home in London, was presented to him at Adelaide. "So for the father's sake the son was dear, and dearer was the father for the child."

Now we turn to the letters. On September 22nd, 1877, he describes the royal way his birthday was kept, and incidentally says that his railway travelling will not be very expensive, for by the good offices of a member of Parliament, with whom he was then staying, a free pass over the Victorian railways has been secured for him.

"Some one told me last evening that I must give a *glowing* account of Sunday evening last, but I replied that I should do nothing of the kind, for I should have to weary you with a somewhat similar description of every Sabbath."

"The Mission room is still near my heart, and great crowds here have not made me unmindful of that small assembly."

"Yesterday I received an invitation to New Zealand. The writer urged many reasons, the most remarkable of which was worded thus:—'My father, I believe, married your grandparents—you owe something to his son!'"

. . . . .

On October 6th, he writes from Quambatook, Victoria, and begins: "Have you noticed the remarkable address which heads this letter? Father will remember that he once received £100, through Mr. Bunning, from a squatter. That individual was no less a person than Gideon Rutherford, Esq., on whose station we are now stopping.

"We started with the object of preaching to the shearers. Since September 20th shearing has been going on at Mr. Rutherford's station, and it is not yet completed. He scarcely knows himself

within a few thousand how many will be shorn. The woolshed is close to the home station, and when first we visited it the morning after our arrival the men left off their work (although they are paid according to the number of sheep shorn), and came round us while one of their number in a few words welcomed Mr. Bunning and the *Right Reverend Mr. Spurgeon* to Quambatook.

"I have such a deal to tell you about our pleasant week at Quambatook that I hardly know where to begin, and can't imagine when I shall finish," he says. On which it may be remarked that he spoke the literal truth, for he finished years afterwards by marrying Mr. Rutherford's daughter! He does not mention her, however, but speaks of Mrs. Rutherford's baptism in the river Avoca, where he offered prayer before Mr. Bunning baptized her, and asks his mother to pray for "the children, that they may be converted." "We left with an invitation to come again and stop for six weeks or longer, and an intimation that Mr. R.'s house at some lakes near Geelong was entirely at our disposal."

From Kerang he reports: "We left this place after having despatched a tin of sweets to Quambatook addressed to 'the bairns who stole our hearts.' Quite a proper thing to do.

"Far from the streams of Father Thames, but near the Murray's banks, away from the hills of Surrey and traversing the plains of Victoria, removed from old friends but surrounded by new ones, your welcome letters take me back again, back o'er the leagues of ocean, back to a mother's side,

to a father's blessing, back to the Mission work and its dear worker, back to the old house at home, back in imagination as I trust God will bring me really in His own good time."

. . . . .

A letter begun at Adelaide on November 24th contains this passage—" one name seems common in the city, that of Day. Connected with the principal newspaper are three gentlemen bearing that name. They are thus distinguished. One of them preaches occasionally and is called Sunday; another attends to the financial department and is termed Pay-day; while the third from his connection with the law courts goes by the appellation of Judgment-day.

" I met up at Kadina a man named Kemp from Waterbeach, who said, 'J've heard your great-grandfather, your grandfather and your father, and now I've heard you.' "

. . . . .

" *Sunday, December* 16*th.*—I preached in the open air a few miles from Adelaide. The advertisement would have amused you. After the usual announcement of meeting came '*Moonlight.*' People drove in from considerable distances, and moonlight aided their return. We had a blessed season beneath a clear Australian sky, among the gum trees.

" What rejoices me is that I am not labouring in vain. This will gladden you too. By God's blessing the Churches are profiting and souls are being saved. I have ever so many kind letters

encouraging me, and though adverse criticism appears occasionally, it is usually in the *Melbourne Argus* or some other atheistical paper."

The first letter in the year 1878 naturally has some paragraphs in the way of retrospect. On January 8th, writing to his mother, he says :—

"Each day I am increasingly thankful that even the *Lady Jocelyn* had Thos. S. for a passenger. We saw God's hand in the matter before I left, but I for one had no idea that it would lead to such results. Little did I think that things would turn out so pleasantly, or that such opportunities would occur for serving the Master.

"Father's characteristic remark to Mr. Bunning that 'he can preach a bit,' which by the way has gone the round of the papers, seems to have suggested to many that C. H. S. would be glad if they would get me to preach more, and as it certainly suited their interests, they have taken the hint and acted on it.

"No one is more thankful that this is one result of my severance from home and friends, than I am. I wanted bringing out and wondered what would do it. Who would have thought twelve months ago that fifteen thousand miles of ocean had to be traversed first? What a grand thing it is to have a God and guide—a Father to direct!"

. . . . .

Visiting Lyndoch Valley he writes: "It was rather a novel spectacle on Saturday afternoon to see Mr. Morgan prepare to give his horses a drink

of water. Very often he drives them down to a neighbouring creek, but sometimes, as on this occasion, he adopts a more expeditious though less economical plan. He opens the back door of the church, and as there is no vestry, he lifts a board that covers the Baptistery, and while the little one fetches a pail the horses are summoned and soon come trotting up. Charlie and Taby, and the little foal and the foal's mamma, are soon anxiously peering into the church and casting longing glances at the pool. But of course they must not enter and there they wait, all four contemplating with their heads poked through the narrow doorway. And when the bucket arrived they were each served in turn with the water that fell from heaven upon the roof, and was collected in the Baptistery. I could not help laughing at the novel scene—my only fear is that unless it rains soon there will be but little water for the ordinance, at all events unless the quadrupeds go elsewhere.

"Perhaps this is a fitting opportunity to tell you how difficult I find it to prepare fresh sermons. I never see a commentary, and rarely get sufficient time to prepare as I like. On the other hand there is this to be said, that going about as I do I need not hesitate to redeliver sermons."

Here is a heart-touch when acknowledging his mother's letter: "Dear Mother, it made me go all goose's flesh to see you sign yourself 'your very own, happy, contented and supremely thankful mother.' Am I not a goose?"

Writing from Melbourne on January 22nd,

1878, to "My very dear Father," he says—"How generous of you to think of placing my name and Charlie's alongside yours as preachers of the Gospel. If I can have but a portion of my father's mantle I might be well content. I feel the honour of serving Jesus more and more, and pray for that full consecration and that consuming zeal which God has helped you to."

This was evidently in response to a letter which his father had written to him on November 23rd, 1877, in which occur the following passages.

"My dear Son Tom,

"I have been greatly delighted with your letters and they have caused great joy all round; especially has your own dear mother been much cheered and comforted. Write all you can for her sake—though we all share the pleasure.

"God has been very gracious to you in opening so many hearts and ears to you. May His grace abide with you that these golden opportunities may all be used to the best possible result. I am overwhelmed with your reception, accepting it as a token of the acceptance which my works have among the people. When I have you and Char at my side to preach the same great truths we shall by God's grace make England know more of the Gospel's power.

"Char is working well at College and will, I trust, come forth thoroughly furnished. When *you* come home I hope that your practice in Australia will lessen your need of college training so that one year may suffice. Still every man regrets

when in the field that he did not prepare better before he entered it. We shall see.

"I hope you will stay while your welcome is warm, and while you are getting and doing good, and then come home a free man in all respects, free I mean from all entanglements, and buckle down to the work of the ministry here.

"Receive your father's best love and think LOTS of this letter, for I am so pressed for time that it means a good deal more than appears upon the paper. May our God bless you more and more and use you in His Kingdom to the utmost possible degree!

"Your loving Father,
"C. H. SPURGEON."

The son is, as yet, free from "entanglements," but unconsciously he is preparing the way for a later date. His next letter, January 29th, 1878, describes a visit from Geelong to the picturesque Lake Como, Mr. Rutherford's residence, and after praising its beauty he says: "But even if the place were only half as inviting I should be happy there, for I am once again amongst my best friends. Just as kind and hearty as they were upon the plains of Quambatook, just as hospitable and friendly as when amongst the haunts of emu and of kangaroo. I need not speak their praises, for 'twould puzzle me to convey in words any adequate idea of their sterling worth."

An incident occurred about this time to which he afterwards referred in his Tabernacle ministry as an example of the joy which may accrue from

the discipline of sorrow. His letter home on February 7th, 1878, makes guarded allusion to it. Here is the extract from the later sermon :—

"I have never told in public, scarce ever in private, of a great sorrow that afflicted me once when I was first in Australia. Whether it was the tongue of slander in the old land, or some misinformation or mistake, I do not know, but there came to my dear father's ears a story which did not reflect credit upon his absent son. It came in such a form that he was almost bound to believe it. I remember the grief that tore my heart when I received a letter from him, chiding me, kindly chiding me, for this supposed wrong-doing. I knew, before God, that I was innocent; but, despite that conviction, there was some pain, of course, and there had to be a delay of many months ere my contradiction of the damaging tale could reach him. I left the matter with God, and He espoused my cause. In a few days' time I received a cablegram—and telegraphing was expensive in those days—which read thus: 'Disregard my letter; was misinformed.' I cannot tell you the thrill of joy that filled my heart to feel that I was restored to my father's approbation and confidence. I will not say to his love, for I had surely never fallen from that. It was many months ere I could come into possession of particulars, but to know that he had found out his mistake and that confidence was restored, why, it was almost worth while having been in the sorrow to experience the delicious thrill"

Writing a week later he says: "I can but repeat the words I wrote to you, 'Tis welcome trouble if it drive me close to Him.' How earnestly did I pray that God would point out the mistake, and before I cried He heard, for I did not know of it till February 5th, and Father telegraphed February 2nd."

In the letters which follow he gives realistic descriptions of a fair at Ballarat, a feast to the Governor of the Colony at which he was present, his journey to Tasmania, boating on the river at Native Point, Perth, inspections of the cattle and sheep, and his acquaintance with his fellow-guest, Mr. Henry Varley, at Mr. Gibson's hospitable home. Of him he says, in spite of some prepossession to the contrary, "he is a companion of a very pleasant and sanctified sort and really he has done me good." In a later letter speaking of his improved health, he says, "When I see Mr. Varley preaching every day, I almost wish I could do the same, and thus devote my life. Perhaps the time will come when this shall be my proper course (evangelizing), and if these quiet months' spell be the preparation for it, who shall call it wasted time?

"Most grateful am I to father for his loving words. Really it is worth all the sadness of being so far away to have such sweet loving counsel from him, and the thought that a recital of my experiences gives him pleasure makes me happy in the extreme. Tell him, please, that as to 'starring' my one desire is to 'turn many to righteousness,' that I may 'shine as the stars for ever and ever.'"

In a letter begun at Hobarton on May 27th occurs this paragraph : " I have to-day discovered in *The Hobarton Mercury* a reprint of dear father's letter to the Albert Street Church, in the Postscript of which he says, ' Love my son Tom if he comes your way.' When I read it I was shivering on board a river steamer, and it warmed the cockles of my heart and no mistake. I think my dear parents vie with each other in the art of letter-writing and skill in correspondence. What a happy fellow I should be to have such correspondents ! "

On June 23rd, 1878, he writes from Melbourne recounting news of blessing in several places of which he has heard, and adds : " There again I have to rejoice in the good that God has wrought in the homes I have visited. God blessed the house of Obededom because His ark was there, and I verily believe that my kind friends have had their reward for entertaining His little servant."

The fifty-five page letter begun at Sydney on July 11th is specially interesting. He tells that on seeking to book his passage to Brisbane the clerk, after stating the fare, said, " You ought to wear a white tie," and when asked the reason told him that clergymen were entitled to reduced rates. After some argument the clerk asked if he were willing to sign his name as " Reverend." This evidently was the first time he had practically faced the question, and when he answered that he would do it if it came cheaper, there was still debate in the office until some one declared that he had journeyed a considerable distance the evening before to hear Mr Spurgeon, and had been

crowded out. "This was proof pretty positive that I *did* preach, and it was decided to carry the important matter to the manager for settlement. He pronounced in my favour, and from this day forth, and even for evermore, a man can be a minister in the eyes of the A.S.N.Co. without wearing a white tie. Marvel, O Earth, and be astonished, O Sea!" This seems to be all the ordination ever given to him.

"Hearty grasps welcomed me to Queensland when we got alongside the quay. They seemed to say, as plain as pressure can speak, 'We're very glad to see your father's son. Selah.'

"Have you noticed the native names for places? They are far better than the English barbarisms that are so common. For my part with the author of the following verse:

> "I like the native names as Parramatta
> And Illawarra and Woolloomooloo,
> Mandoura, Woogarora, Bulkomatta,
> Tomah, Toongabbee, Mittagong, Meroo;
> Buckobbla, Cumleroy and Coolingatta,
> The Warragumby, Bogielong, Emu,
> Cookbundoon, Carrabaija, Wingycaribbee,
> The Woblondilly, Yurumbon, Bungaribbee."

While writing this letter he had received and has treasured a letter from his father dated June 5th, 1878, in which occur the following paragraphs:

"Your letters give us all great delight, and the readers of *The Sword and Trowel* enthusiastically praise the delicious dishes which your dear mother prepares from your capital material. Keep on excelling where your father fails.

"If only you were here a look at my Australian son would make a day's delight. Everybody seems interested in your goings on. How rejoiced I am I am quite unable to tell you. I would give all glory to God, but I may also praise *you* for the excellent manner in which you have conducted yourself on all occasions, out of the pulpit as well as in it. Go on, dear son, as you have done, and my heart will have to bless the Lord daily at every remembrance of you.

"I shall be glad soon to see you home, but still I should like you to see New Zealand. Mr. Sands thinks you would be a suitable successor to Dr. Culross, who is leaving Highbury, but the time which must intervene will, I think, render that of no avail. We will leave such engagements till your course can be more clearly foreseen.

"We want zealous, cultured, sound ministers, and when one of these can be met with several churches will be after him. May our Lord clothe you with so much power that you may be very valiant in Israel!

"Dear son, your love is very sweet to me. God keep you ever and bring you back to

"Your loving father

"Who again blesses you in the name of the Lord,

"C. H. SPURGEON."

To this the son responds: "How I value dear Father's letter words fail to tell. Bless him! a thousand times. Every word is a treasure indeed. A few minutes devoted from his precious time has caused his wandering son hours of rare delight.

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Foremost amongst my happiness is the joy of knowing that he is delighted. To be able to add a ray of sunshine to his noble life is—well—I was going to say well worth living for, and having said it I'll stick to it, for I mean it most assuredly.

"I was mightily amused at the reason of Mr. Sands' visit. I wonder somewhat that so prudent a man should cherish such an idea—but there, we have known Mr. Sands making mistakes before. Whatever other folks may fancy, Thos. S. feels himself very incompetent for any such undertaking, but nevertheless he feels confident that the Potter will shape the vessel for the particular service in which He chooses to employ it, whatever that may be."

In the letter begun at Brisbane on August 16th he says: "Who would have expected to see George Coulson, our old coachman, his wife and family, at Ipswich? O how pleased they were to be sure. Such delight! Talk. Talk. The very sight of him stirred up old memories, and in course of conversation forgotten incidents came fresh to mind. Coulson told me several times that he was surprised *I* was the one to be preaching and travelling, and was incessant in enquiries after Master Charles. I told him that it was evident I had turned out better than he anticipated, and in admitting that he explained that the reason why he expected my brother to be such a prodigy was because 'there was always such a deal of mischief in Master Charles.'"

The next letter, begun on August 16th, is the last of the series of home letters which lovingly

preserved are lengthy enough to fill this volume. It carries him on to Warwick, August 26th, and suddenly breaks off, "But a few hours after writing the foregoing, I received the dismal news that Mother was worse. Oh! may my gracious God spare her till I return. I give up all engagements except to-night (when may the Lord assist) and hope to be home the second or third week in October. I am trying to cast all my care on Him, for I am His care."

The dismal news was contained in a cable message, "Mother's worse, return." The next morning he started for home, preaching at Brisbane and Melbourne on the way. At a farewell meeting on September 12th, at Melbourne, he was presented with a silver epergne and a sum of money. "One of the happiest experiences of that week was a chat with dear Mr. Rutherford, who came down from Quambatook although very busy."

Writing on October 13th, from Aden, whither he had come on his homeward voyage, he says, "I had expected to be home by now, for as soon as I received the recalling telegram I hastened down to Brisbane, but missed the mail steamer by about ten minutes, nor could I possibly overtake her. By my telegram you understood, I trust, that the *Lusitania* is bearing me across the water. She is considered a very fast boat, but we have been singularly unfortunate. From Melbourne to Adelaide we experienced really dreadful weather. An evening congregation at Adelaide on Sunday, August 15th, were disappointed, for we did not arrive till late that night, but I addressed

crowded churches on Monday and Tuesday. Leaving Adelaide we found the weather not in the least abated—boisterous to the last degree.

"Sometimes I half expect you to be pretty well the day that 'Tommy comes marching home,' and then oh, joy! the vision brightens, but my dreams are not all so bright, as you can well imagine. These have been dreary weeks indeed! Once only have I preached, the other Sundays have been too hot or too rough."

In several of the later letters he speaks of himself as his mother's "sea-gull." That reference is explained, and the story of the Australian visit well ended, by an extract from a sermon preached some time afterwards:

"Some time before I left the other side of the world, where God has called me to preach this same gospel, I received from home a very beautiful Christmas-card, which I greatly prize, partly because it is most artistic in itself, but more because of the good mother who sent it to me. Across a troubled sea, angry and storm-tossed, a sea-gull flies with its snowy wings outspread above the dark waters, its whiteness standing in striking contrast to the gloomy clouds, while just above the picture are these words: 'I would take thee home to my heart, but thou wilt not come to me.' I am not ashamed to confess that, when I read the inscription, the tears started to my eyes, and I said to myself, 'O mother mine, how gladly would I come to thee if I only could!' But on my voyage home—for the way soon after opened for me to

return—I occupied some of my leisure moments in making as exact a copy of this picture as I could. The same white sea-bird, the same angry waves, the same dark clouds; but I did not put the same words above them. I sent the sketch on from Naples, so that it might arrive before me some four or five days, and this was the message that it brought: 'I am coming home to thy heart! Wilt thou not welcome me?' The answer I received at ten o'clock one Thursday night, when mother's arms were round her son and mother's kiss was on his lips.

"O God, how often hast Thou said to the prodigal, 'I would take thee home to My heart, but thou wilt not come to Me.' Oh, help him now, as Thy Spirit only can, to say believingly, 'I am coming home to Thy heart! Wilt Thou not welcome me?' Oh, that Thou wilt! So let it be for Thy mercy's sake. Amen."

CHAPTER VI

A YEAR WITH HIS FATHER

On Sunday, November 10th, 1878, Thomas Spurgeon was suddenly called to preach in the Tabernacle in his father's place. Until late on Saturday C. H. Spurgeon had hoped himself to take the services, especially as he had asked his usual congregation to vacate their places in the evening in favour of strangers, a practice observed for some time once a quarter during his later ministry. There was scarcely any other choice but that "Son Tom" must step into the breach, and with courage and modesty he accepted the task, commending himself so greatly to the people that he was invited for the following Sunday, and for one of the services the Sunday after. His brother Charles took the other service on the third Sunday.

The record in *The Sword and Trowel* is tantalizing in its brevity: "During the pastor's illness the pulpit of the Tabernacle has been five times occupied by Mr. Thomas Spurgeon and once by Mr. Charles; and it has been a delight of no ordinary kind for both of the sick parents to hear on all hands the highly favourable judgments of God's people as to the present usefulness and ultimate

eminence of their sons. Applications for the services of Messrs. C. and T. Spurgeon are becoming so numerous that it is needful to prepare the writers' minds for a refusal. For some time to come they would prefer to lend their father all the assistance he may require. Godly parents should be encouraged by our experience to pray for and expect the salvation of their offspring."

His father recovered sufficiently to preach once in December, and in the middle of January he journeyed to his favourite resting-place in the South of France—Mentone, taking his son Thomas with him. After such long and distant travels it is scarcely surprising that the son was not very eager to leave home so soon again, even though it was in the company of the father to whom he was so deeply attached. In fact he was still his mother's boy. But the advantage to himself when his father suggested that he would guide his studies while they were away, as well as the hope of rendering some help to the invalid, at length prevailed. His letters to his mother during the three months he was abroad have been preserved, and in the fourth volume of his father's biography edited by his mother, he himself gives an account of the visit.

Mentone, with its two bays, of all the places in the French Riviera was the chosen retreat during the last quarter of the nineteenth century of those who sought winter sunshine apart from the gaieties of fashion. Dr. Bennet—whose beautiful garden, "a veritable paradise on the side of a rocky steep," is one of the sights of the place—was the first to

draw public attention to the charms of this part of the coast, and Mr. Spurgeon shared with him in promoting its fame. Indeed, he had hoped to issue a descriptive volume on Mentone and its neighbourhood, many of the chapters having been published in *The Sword and Trowel* in his later years. With Cap Martin on the west, the Italian frontier on the east, the Berceau behind, Corsica visible on fine mornings and evenings across the tideless blue sea, and numberless excursions possible up the valleys running inland, it is an ideal place for an extended sojourn. Year after year Mr. Spurgeon came thither. John Richard Green, the historian, died here, "still learning," as the inscription on his tomb tells us. Here were discovered in a sea-cave the skeletons of some pre-historic men, which I was fortunate enough to see shortly after they were found in 1893. Here too, in 1892, Spurgeon died.

The books appointed for the young student at Mentone seem chiefly to have been a French History, a Primer on Political Economy, Carlyle's *French Revolution*, which his father read to him, as for long he was accustomed to read it year by year for his own pleasure, and Hodge's *Outlines of Theology*. In the evening Thomas would read to the company *Ingoldsby Legends*. A curious medley, but probably quite effective for the end in view. The son reports, "The driest matter bursts into a blaze when C. H. S. puts some of his fire to it."

He had the privilege of meeting three notable men—Hudson Taylor, George Müller, and Pastor

John Bost of the Hospitals of La Force. Each of them contributed something to the mind all eager for impressions. At a communion service George Müller prayed for "the dear son in Australia," on which there comes the remark, "I had great pleasure in informing him that I was the son in Australia, and oh! how warmly did he grasp my hand—the dear old man. Little did we dream then that, nine years after, he would help to marry me in New Zealand."

Quite a number of sketches were made by him during this visit, most of which have been reproduced and published. Mr. Spurgeon, as was his wont, conducted family prayers in his own room morning by morning, and the Presbyterian service then held in Mrs. Dudgeon's villa was taken several times by the younger preacher. During a later visit Mr. C. H. Spurgeon opened the pretty church where Rev. L. E. Somerville has ministered year by year ever since. I saw him as he passed through London the other week, and he reports that in this war year he has had a busier winter than ever.

There was also the constant study of nature—trees and flowers and trap-door spiders. The Carnival afforded great amusement. An invitation came from America. "Sometimes Father says it would be well to accept, and again that he would like me soon to be settling down at home. When he asked me if I would like to go, I told him the simple truth that I should be very sorry to have to return home again as from Australia."

In April they were home again, and when father and son appeared together in the Tabernacle pulpit

on the thirteenth of that month, the congregation, glad to greet them both, spontaneously rose and sang the doxology.

A little while after that I saw him for the first time. I was in the College with his brother, and through the failure of the health of A. J. Clarke, a call came for a helper to join Manton Smith at Bacup. Mr. Spurgeon asked me to go, and sent the note by the hand of Son Tom. Already I had spoken night after night during the February services in the Tabernacle, and now I was to be launched on my life work. I am glad it was from the hand of T. S. that I got my marching orders. Perhaps I may be allowed to mention here that my first sermon in England was, without any arrangement of my own, preached at Teversham on the spot where C. H. Spurgeon preached his first sermon. It was on Easter Sunday evening, 1875, when I was visiting at the home of my friend Rev. J. W. Campbell, whose father was then minister of Zion Chapel, and the last time I visited Cambridge two persons were present who remembered both the occasion and the sermon!

During that year Thomas Spurgeon also entered the College, and it is reported that he showed aptitude in his studies. On the first Friday his father lectured he saw the new student at the back of the hall, and said he would like to see him at the front; on which he was by acclamation elected as an "Apostle," as the twelve men on the front bench were named. He made the thirteenth that year. At once he came to the top bench, and as he sat down beside Charles he scored a round of ap-

plause by saying that he would rather be beside his brother than beside himself. Dr. McCaig says: "At the Front has been his place ever since: his gifts have made way for him; he was never a shirker. Sitting with him in the Greek classes I know how faithfully he did his work." But ill-health often interrupted his attendance, and ere the year was out it became evident that he must seek his further training where he had received his earliest—under the sunny Australian skies.

So on Thursday, October 2nd, 1879, he sailed on the *Sobraon*, having as his companions two of the College men, J. S. Harrison and R. McCullough. He had seen and admired the ship at Melbourne, little expecting that he would sail in her before long.

His father saw him off and then came to the Tabernacle for the week-night service, which in his time was a high festival. I sat behind him on the platform that evening, and remember the sermon he preached from the text, "Hannah answered and said, 'No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit.'" He preached, as he ever did, out of his own experience, but made no reference to his own sorrow. Yet those who knew could trace an undertone of sadness all through the discourse. It is published in the 1880 volume. "Brethren and sisters," he said, "this is one of our hardest lessons: to learn to give up what we most prize at the command of God and to do so cheerfully." And again, "Take up your load, my beloved. Do not become murmurers as well as mourners. Carry your cross, for it is indeed a

golden one." Yet once more, "This bitterness of spirit may be an index of our need of prayer, and an incentive to that holy exercise. When a live coal from off the altar touches our lips we should preach, but when a drop of gall falls on our lips we should pray."

Only twice in his life did C. H. Spurgeon spend a whole night in prayer. He was not indeed accustomed to remain long on his knees, for his idea of prayer was the passing of a cheque over the bank counter; there was no need to urge that it should be honoured, all that was necessary was to wait till the answer came. But twice he agonized all night, like Jacob "confident in self-despair,"

> With Thee all night I mean to stay
> And wrestle till the break of day.

One of these nights of intense supplication was for a personal need, and those who know his history may conjecture when he was driven to his knees, like Lincoln, because he had nowhere else to go. The other was when the hopes he had built on his son Tom being by his side were shattered. How deep those hopes had gone may be guessed by the upheaval of his life when they were renounced. Truly this bitterness of spirit may be an index of our need of prayer, and an incentive to its holy exercise.

Did he get the victory? The next Sunday morning's sermon—and, remember, he always preached from his own experience—was "Mistrust of God deplored and denounced." He was halting

upon his thigh, but his Bethel and his Peniel had made him a prince with God; he had in very truth prevailed. "How long will it be ere they believe me?" was his text. "Certain of us," he says, "have received special and infallible proofs of the Lord's faithfulness to His promises. He has answered the prayers of some of us in a way that has drowned our eyes with tears of joy." What a vista that opens into the watches of that Thursday night!

Did he get the victory? Listen to the closing words of the sermon: "God the Holy Ghost helping you, resolve in your hearts this day that all the boasted discoveries of science you will doubt, all the affirmations of the wise you will doubt, all the speculations of great thinkers you will doubt, all your own feelings and all the conclusions drawn from outward circumstances you will doubt, yea and everything that seems to be demonstrable to a certainty you will doubt, but never, never, never, while eternity shall last, will you suffer the thought to pass your mind that God can ever in the least degree run back from anything that He has spoken, or change the word that has gone forth of His lips."

CHAPTER VII

THE SETTLEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

THE voyage in the *Sobraon* was not quite so pleasant as that in the *Lady Jocelyn*, nor the opportunities of preaching so frequent. The conduct of the Sunday services on board was given to a curate who seems to have been a rather ineffective person, and as one of his fellow-passengers phrases it, "dissent was at a discount." Still there were many opportunities of service, and not a little good cheer.

In writing to the Rev. J. S. Harrison some time before, in an undated letter, Thomas Spurgeon advises, as a practised traveller, about luggage and equipment, and advises very sensibly. Two other letters with further details follow, but the first letter to his mother is dated October 13th, 1879, "not far from Madeira," and from this the following extracts are taken.

"On Saturday evening I had asked and gained the captain's permission to hold a service in the Second Cabin, whose occupants were desirous for the same, and we had arranged that 'Mac' should preach. But somehow the first-class folks got to

fancy that I was to give the address. Lest any should think themselves taken in, I was constrained to promise to preach the next Sunday."

"I had been longing to get at the sailors, and when I went for'ard I received an invitation to come at any time and address them. I should be welcome morning, noon or night. Some of them had heard Father preach, one was at Melbourne when I was there before, and altogether I found them to be (as they called themselves) a tidy set of men.

"In all respects we are very comfortable. Our ship is a beauty to look at and a good 'un to go. We have been longer getting to our present position" (in relation to the passengers) "than in any previous voyage, but that is not the fault of the ship. We seem to pass everything on the road, and have two or three times got lovely sights of barques, brigs and ships running close alongside for a while but gradually dropping astern.

"I think you will agree with me that my early morning exercise is a wise and health-giving proceeding. As soon as sleep is over I arise (generally between five and six), and take a turn at the pump and have a sea-water bath in the tub on deck. There are two small bathrooms at the top of the stairs, but they are in such constant demand and are so poorly supplied with water that we prefer to take it in turns to plunge into the tub and have the hose played on to us. Before and after the refreshing shower we work at the pump which supplies the baths and tub for washing passengers and deck, working handles backward and forward

as in a manual fire engine. Sometimes, too, we take a turn at the brooms and mops and try to develop muscle." Quite a pleasant glimpse this, of three wholesome-minded men.

"I think I shall get through a good deal of reading. During the first week or two it is quite impossible to attempt any heavy stuff, so I devoured *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Since then I have been perusing a deeply interesting biography of honest Hugh Latimer. Then of a morning, besides the best of books, I read *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Miss Havergal's portion, and a chapter of *Never Say Die*."

On October 20th in the same letter he says: "I cannot forbear to tell you of the happy Sabbath we spent yesterday. At twelve o'clock we three and a young man named Barber assembled for prayer, and right heartily did we invoke the Master's smile. We thought of the blessing vouchsafed the week before and hoped it might be doubled. We rose refreshed and strengthened for work, and when the hour came for service and a goodly number of folks assembled I felt we were ready for the answer to our supplications. Indeed, we had them part answered already in the presence of so many hearers of the Word. Speaking to them as we separated I told them that I and my brethren would come to the forecastle in the evening, at which they were indeed delighted.

"At seven o'clock we went for'ard and met with quite an enthusiastic reception. Having preached in the afternoon I could not attempt an address, but we all took part in a service that to outsiders

would have seemed very rough and ready, but which was to honest Jack 'a real good time.' When I proposed coming to see them on Wednesday evening their unfeigned gratification and gratitude found expression in polite 'Thank you Sir's and hearty 'God bless you's.

"But the best remains to be told. On leaving the foc'sle Mr. Barber imparted to us the joyful tidings that while we were singing he had been talking to and praying with a young man in Second Cabin, who had at length found peace in believing. He had been a professing Christian and nothing more, had given way to drink, but during my sermon and afterwards the Spirit strove with him, and by our brother's prayers and conversation he was led to the sinner's Friend."

Another letter of no less than 152 pages was begun on November 29th, when about a fortnight from Melbourne. In this the traveller begins by contrasting his feelings on the two voyages, the assurance that he will not now be a stranger in Austral lands, but his fear that his absence from home may be longer. He writes with satisfaction that he has not coughed once since stepping on board. He gives a long description of the captain and officers: the captain being compared to a bull-dog, and the first officer to a Skye terrier. Incidentally, in describing the sailmaker, he says that "there are about two acres of canvas on our masts and yards."

"Altogether I have come to the conclusion that this is the most godless set of people that I have

ever met—a fair specimen of the world at large I dare say, but certainly more light and frivolous and sinful than any I have met before. And yet on Sundays they persist in calling themselves 'miserable sinners,' while all the time they are delighting themselves in iniquity. Saddest of all is it to find the curate the ringleader of their amusements. 'Good morning, Spurgeon,' is the most I ever get from him and as brief a reply is all he gets from me, and we are mutually edified by the conversation!"

The captain had his wife and little daughter "Coral" on board, and on her fourth birthday Thomas Spurgeon composed some verses in her honour which gave him the reputation on board of being "a tremendous poet."

Of the Sunday services during the voyage he writes: "While I must admit that the work has been very discouraging I am right glad we undertook it. During this voyage I heard of a conversion that took place during my first one, so we will hope for a joyful repetition of that experience. Our meetings with the sailors were not much more encouraging. Several times in the midst of a discourse the order was given, 'All hands reef the main sheet,' and our hopes of reaching the heart were scattered."

A further considerable list of books which have been read is given as the shores of Australia are neared—quite a creditable report. The drinking on board seems to have been considerable. "No less than 5,000 bottles of beer have been used, and the *Sobraon* can proudly boast that more liquor

has been consumed during the voyage of '79 than in any previous year."

The lengthy letter, so full and descriptive, must have been a great joy to his parents; its last three sheets were written ashore. "Between ten and eleven on December 18th we cast anchor off Sandridge Pier, and soon Mr. Wade and Mr. Garrett came to meet us. I was soon visited by the ministers, and everybody welcomes me most heartily.

"My good friends the Rutherfords have left Quambatook and have gone to New Zealand. I may have more to say about them after seeing Mr. Bunning on Christmas Day. In a week's time I shall be in Tasmania."

Rev. R. McCullough is able to recall the pleasant days of the voyage in the *Sobraon* during which he shared a cabin with Mr. Spurgeon and their mutual experiences thereafter. "One looks back with fondness upon those days we three spent at sea. We spent Christmas at Melbourne, and arrived at Tasmania on the closing days of the year. We were cordially welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Gibson of Native Point, whose names will never be forgotten. They loved C. H. Spurgeon, whom they had never seen, and loved his son as if he had been their own. They consulted him about their plans for erecting places of worship, and he had an important part in the founding of the denomination on this beautiful island.

"Mr. Spurgeon and I spent a good part of the year together at Native Point. He did not feel fit for work, he had first to get strong: riding,

rowing and croquet filled up a good part of our time. Mr. Gibson was rather stern in manner, but his guest's playfulness and sparkling wit were irresistible. His life was good. He had position and gifts which would have opened many doors to him, and he was at an age when smiles and flattery are often dangerous; but I never knew him to trouble about society, or to have an inclination for anything of the world. He took a leading part in the laying of foundation stones and in the opening ceremonies of our church buildings.

"He visited me twice at Hobart, but there lingers with me the picture of him as I knew him in all the freshness of youth, with gifts that gave promise of something great, looking into the future and quietly preparing himself for it, a knight with honour unstained, armour bright, anticipating his battle with calm confidence."

Those days also dwell in the memory of his friend the Rev. Harry Wood, who writes concerning them: "He was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Gibson at Native Point during his first visit to Tasmania in 1878. He soon won their hearts and became more like a son than a visitor.

"It was during this first visit that in company with the Gibsons he went to Wesley Dale, the country residence of the revered Mr. and Mrs. Henry Reed, who sought to make known the Gospel both in Tasmania and in the 'Regions Beyond.' Mr. Reed had arranged for Mr. Spurgeon to hold some services, and in this Bush district large congregations gathered and God manifestly blessed the Word.

"At this time there were only two Baptist churches in Tasmania; we have now thirteen churches with some forty mission stations. Our beloved friends Mr. and Mrs. Gibson, with their son Mr. W. Gibson, have given approximately £70,000 in support of the Baptized Church in Tasmania. On the human side we owe it greatly to the influence of Mr. Thomas Spurgeon that this work for God has been accomplished. When the large Tabernacle was built in Launceston it was hoped that he would have been the Pastor.

"My first meeting with our beloved President was on his second visit. I came over from Australia to spend a month's holiday in Tasmania. On arriving at Perth station a young gentleman came to the carriage window and inquired for me by name. It was Mr. Spurgeon, and he got into the carriage and rode with me to the next station, where he had just time to catch the return train to Perth. We were only about a quarter of an hour in each other's company, but he won my heart, and the friendship commenced in the railway carriage grew and deepened with the years.

"What happy buoyant days those were. Our generous host provided us with saddle horses, and we rode all over the country taking the word of life to most out-of-the-way places. The result of my visit was that within a few months I was led to settle in this—'The Gem of the Southern Seas'—where I have now laboured in the Gospel for thirty-five years.

"Mr. Spurgeon never forgot those early days.

During his great and busy life in London he wrote me: 'It was all an apprenticeship.'"

In *The Sword and Trowel* of October 1880 there is an article entitled "Tasmanian Tabernacles," describing the erection of two houses of prayer there, one at Deloraine where Mr. Harrison was labouring, and one at Longford in connection with the work carried forward by Mr. McCullough, both of which were to be completed the following year.

The December number of the same magazine has an article on his Australian experiences entitled "Warrambeen Revisited," the sheep station where, in 1878, some services had been held.

In the "shearers' hut," a large building where in shearing time the men sleep, with a dining-room and fireplace beyond, some 150 people gathered to the preaching, a very fine assemblage under the circumstances, illustrating the remark of a good man who said, "It's the son of your father only that could get such a congregation." In the evening he preached again in the church, and the news rapidly spreading, people came from far and near. Then on to Ballarat, where "the Academy of Music was attended by the largest colonial audience (about 2,300) that I have ever preached to, and the desire for blessing was evident in the rapt attention and devout feeling."

In the January, 1881, number we read of "Trophies from Toowoomba," a township a hundred miles from Brisbane, where a great crowd assembled for the preaching, and the report to the preacher was "Your testimony in Toowoomba gave us a great lift." The April number has an

article on "Over the Ranges" by the Southern and Western Railway of Queensland on September 8th, 1880, when the journey to Toowoomba was undertaken and Mr. Spurgeon rode for a considerable portion of the way on the engine. "The name of Spurgeon works wonders in many circles, and especially with those who, like this engineer, have 'been to the Tabernacle and heard him.'"

Of the staple of his ministry at this time we get a glimpse in an incident recorded by the preacher himself. "Were you hearing young Spurgeon last night, and what did you think of him?" asked one. "Little enough," replied the other. "It was the same old stuff. He told us nothing new." But if he kept to the old truth, and largely to the old phraseology, he was evidently acquiring a style. From his writing we may judge him to be in that transition period which is as awkward for a speaker or writer as the hobbledehoy stage is for a growing man.

Early in the year 1881 we find him in New Zealand, whither he had gone to supply the pulpit at Hanover Street Church, Dunedin, which was at that time without a minister. He was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford, who had moved hither from Australia to a house, "Dalmore," beautifully situated overlooking the town and harbour. Here he remained for six months, and it is not to be overlooked that Miss Lila Rutherford, afterwards to become Mrs. Spurgeon, was, as a school girl, also at home at the time. The next call was from the south of the South Island to the north of the North

Island, about a thousand miles away, the outcome of which was announced in the January, 1882, *Sword and Trowel* by the simple statement: "The President has peculiar pleasure in announcing that another Pastors' College student, his son, Thomas Spurgeon, has accepted the pastorate of the church at Auckland, New Zealand, lately under the care of Pastor A. W. Webb."

On August 22nd, 1881, he writes to his fellow-traveller, Mr. Harrison, urging him to visit New Zealand. "This is a wonderful country and well worth seeing, a sinful one much needing the Gospel. I have had much blessing here, but not as much as in Dunedin. I shall stay about Auckland for some while yet," he wrote, "it is such a lovely place." To Mr. Harrison he dedicated, about this time, his poem "All Glory," which was prompted by an incident in his experience, and in the same letter he declares his intention to seek the "old country" in the spring of 1883. Of course that plan was frustrated by the development of affairs.

"In a week or two's time," he writes on October 21st, "I shall be the Pastor (*pro tem.*) of this church, *i.e.*, until I am able to get advice from home or am decided by other circumstances." So he urged his friend to come to his help. On November 11th things had developed. "I have accepted the Pastorate here at least for a time, and mention this as an extra reason why you should visit N.Z. I feel sure the Lord would have me stop here for a while, nor should I be surprised if I remain for good. It depends on three things. (1) If my health holds good. (2) If the

Lord blesses the word. (3) If my parents offer no decided objection."

In order to facilitate Mr. Spurgeon's acceptance of the pastorate the church suggested that he should visit other parts of New Zealand during the summer months, and that Mr. Harrison and Mr. Isaacs should help during his absence. He writes to the former in Tasmania on November 26th saying: "If I settle here—of course there is still a doubt—I shall want my books, etc. It would be a wonderful convenience to me if you could possibly bring them. At the same time I should like to fetch them myself, but it means a long journey and injury to this church unless you could fill the gap. Then if you were here I confess I should like to work with you. I am sure we should have some glorious times."

On December 7th, 1881, he has heard that Harrison is coming, and writes to him: "I feel pretty certain that I shall remain here if my health holds. A telegram from home leaves it all to myself and promises no objection from my parents."

His father wrote to him on the subject from Mentone, on November 28th, 1881:

"Mine own Dear Son,

"How your whole conduct delights me! You are quite able to judge for yourself, and yet you defer to your parents in all things. May your days, according to the promise, be long in the land.

"I think the case is clear enough that you ought to settle, for a time at least, in Auckland, but still you see, we know but little of the facts and so I

preferred to leave you to your own judgment. I know what that judgment will be. I believe the work before you will arouse all your energies—which is good; but I hope it will not tax them—which would be mischievous. It is a sphere worthy of you, and yet its excellence lies rather in what it may be than in what it is. All things considered, it is full of promise.

"Do not come home. I should dearly love to see you, but how could we part with you again? Stay away till there is a call to come home. When the Lord wills it, it will be safer and will be better for us all. To come home in 1882 would be a journey for which there is no demand, at a time when you are needed elsewhere.

"I have thought of you many times here, and especially while worshipping in the room at Les Grottes. How honoured I am to have sons who preach the Gospel so fully. I would sooner this than be the progenitor of the twelve patriarchs.

"Dear Son, may the Lord make you his workman wisely instructed in moulding upon the wheel a future empire, as yet plastic clay. Who knows what the southern colonies may become? Impress your Master's image upon the molten wax, and seal New Zealand as the Lord's for ever.

"May your desires be fulfilled and your expectations be exceeded.

"Your loving father,

"C. H. SPURGEON.

"Son Tom."

A week later we get a glimpse of his surroundings.

"We, *i.e.*, two young men and myself, think of changing our abode soon. Here I have no separate study and no stable (for I possess a pony now). So we talk of getting a furnished house a little way out of town. If we succeed we shall be able to accommodate you finely, and I want to be with you all the time you can stay here."

On his arrival Mr. Harrison voted for Sunday evening services in the Choral Hall at once, and although somewhat dubious about it the Church agreed. From the first the gatherings were an immense success, and there were distinct signs of a spiritual movement. From Mount Eden, where his home was situated, the pastor writes to the departing evangelist on February 25th: "The Choral Hall meetings are a grand success, and the morning congregations are as large as ever. The Church Census has just been taken, and you will be pleased to know that although we were out of the Choral Hall—it being otherwise engaged—we had the largest congregations both morning and evening of any church in Auckland, 547 in the morning and over 600 in the evening. *The Star* put a footnote to our record saying that hundreds were turned away. This is a lift for us. To God be the glory. Oh! that the hundreds would come to Jesus! They will yet, I believe." Again on March 7th, 1882, he writes: "We are still rejoicing in the lift you gave us. I have had Friday evening meetings with converts: schoolroom quite full and such nice times; about seventy have returned cards, over fifty wishing to join Wellesley Street. Regular application for membership has been made

in only a few cases, and I am not anxious that they should be too soon. Last Sunday night, although the meeting was not advertised, the Choral Hall was crammed full, and we had a glorious time."

Mr. Harrison returned to England, partly in pursuance of his own plans, partly to give a report of the prospects at Auckland, and on June 26th of that year we find him at the Metropolitan Tabernacle prayer meeting. "He was able to bear personal testimony to the need of a new chapel for the large congregation already gathered at Auckland." There plans had been laid on a generous scale, an acre of land had been purchased, and a Bazaar projected to be held at Christmas. The glad father in London proposed that gifts of money and kind should be sent out from the friends in London. Some acknowledgments were made the following month in *The Sword and Trowel*, with the reminder that "The members of the Old Tabernacle at home should be the first to help the New Tabernacle in Auckland. They cannot have forgotten young Thomas whom they were so pleased to hear. Let him not imagine that he has slipped out of the memories of those at home."

Tidings now began to arrive of the high success of the new ministry in New Zealand. Such items as "Nineteen were baptized, sixteen of whom were present to receive the right hand of fellowship on the following Sunday"; "At our last church meeting seven were proposed for membership"; "Last Sunday week we had an overflowing congregation at the Choral Hall. Every chair about the building was placed down the aisles and

REV. THOMAS SPURGEON (a caricature).
From "The Observer and Free Lance," June 4th, 1887.

occupied " ; " Wednesday evening prayer meetings still continue to draw large congregations " ; " On Sunday we had a larger congregation than ever at the Choral Hall " ; " Congregations keep up well : Sundays for the last five weeks have been wet and cold and therefore most uncomfortable ; but for all that the people come to be warmed in their souls. When once inside the chapel and the hall, and the Holy Spirit warming up the people in their hearts, we then have a good time. The young man wears well, no diminution of ' a new way of telling the old, old story.' "

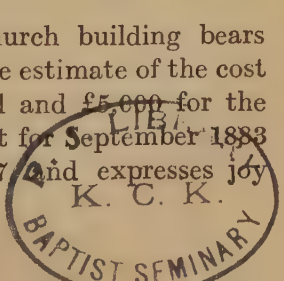
In *The Chicago Standard* of August 25th, 1887, Major Henry C. Dane gives some reminiscences of his visit to Auckland. Speaking of Thomas Spurgeon he says : " He is quite tall, rather spare, sharp-visaged and spiritually intellectual, a plain, unaffected, strong preacher, often, when deep in his subject, much like his father in manner and style. There is that same deep earnestness, that same yearning of soul, that same sweetness of spirit, that same simplicity and devoutness of manner which captivates and captures his hearers, and that same boldness of utterance which commands the respect of all." Which makes pleasant reading.

On October 10th, 1882, he had the joy of welcoming Joseph Cook to Auckland. " We were strangers to each other," he said, " except that he knew my parents, and I knew his children—in the shape of the celebrated Boston lectures. Having secured my prize, it was my honour to conduct him home—if Bachelor's Hall be worthy of such a

sacred name—to break his fast and share our family prayers." They climbed Mount Eden together. "We had not travelled far when something arrested our companion's attention, and demanded a halt, though I neither saw nor heard anything unusual. A lark singing o'er our heads had gained one ardent admirer, and America soon listened entranced to New Zealand's song. Our young colonial thrilled the heart of Boston's noble citizen. 'You, fellow, you,' said he, 'why, you're worth timing,' and out came the watch. Then we were told that, during his visit to England, he was so anxious to hear a lark that he would not leave till in one of the southern counties he listened to the sweet music. There he timed the lark's song for seven consecutive minutes." Afterwards there was a lecture which lasted two hours and a half to the crowded Opera House. "Silence reigned supreme over the people, and Mr. Cook over the silence."

Welcoming Mr. Harrison on his return to the Antipodes, Mr. Spurgeon writes under date April 7th, 1883: "The wave that rose during your visit has not subsided yet. Even lately I have converts applying for baptism who trace either their first impression or final decision to your ministry. You, too, were my chief adviser as to engaging the Choral Hall, and *you were right.* It has remained crowded ever since."

The circular about the church building bears date March 16th, 1882, and the estimate of the cost then was £3,200 for the land and £5,000 for the building. The Church Report for September 1883 gives the membership as 567, and expresses joy



that with the aid of a legacy the last instalment due on the land has been paid; and that the Church solemnly covenanted to determine to open the new Tabernacle entirely free from debt. The old chapel had been sold for £2,500, and the estimate for the new building had risen to £7,000, leaving at that time a sum of £2,400 still to be secured.

The Christmas Bazaar seems to have raised £1,000, and the Stone-laying at Easter, April 14th, 1884, brought in £500, but the estimates still grew (as estimates will), and it was determined that Mr. Thomas Spurgeon should visit England to obtain help from the old country. He started early in May. At Melbourne he shared in what Mr. Chapman declared to be the best meeting the Baptist denomination had ever known in that part of the world—some 1,500 people came to tea. He was present at the opening of the Launceston Tabernacle in Tasmania. On May 27th the members of the newly formed Baptist Union of Tasmania marched down in a body to see him on board the *Iberia*, the ship that was to bear him home.

"Bless the old boat that carried us so well," he says. "She never looked so nice as when we had the pleasure of seeing the last of her. At Paddington my brother met me and bore me off in triumph to the Metropolitan Tabernacle. I was soon in the embrace of the best man in the world, and soon afterwards bowling along behind two swift steeds towards 'Westwood.' Weariness was forgotten in excitement, especially when Mother's

arms were around the wanderer and I was safe at home.

" Sunday at the Tabernacle was almost too good. Such sermons ! Such singing ! Such a communion service ! Such hearty welcomes ! Dear Father announced that I would preach on Sunday week, with collections for the Auckland Tabernacle, and the people are delighted at the prospect of hearing me and helping us."

On July 16th at the annual fête of the Stockwell Orphanage, at which one of the chief items was " Welcome home to Mr. Thomas Spurgeon," the guest of the day said that there was only one man's name in Australia and New Zealand which was heard as much as the name of his dear father. He guessed they wondered what the other name was. It was John Ploughman. Then he gave his parable of the three telegrams, which became quite classic. The first was the message which summoned him home in 1878. " Mother's worse—Return," on which he based God's call to sinners to come back to Him, and continued—" Not many months ago it fell to my lot to be the sender of a cablegram. Amongst other words were these, ' I am coming home.' " He wanted them all to send that telegram to their Father that afternoon. Then there was the third telegram. A few days afterwards he received an answer from his father. There was a lot about business, saying he would send a first-rate man to take his place, though a second-class man would have done that. But he put a sweet word at the beginning, " Welcome." Turning to his father he said, " Bless you, Father. I knew I

was welcome. You had to pay extra for it, but it would have been a thousand pities to have left it out. I read it on board ship, and it made assurance doubly sure. So the heavenly answer waits all who come: Welcome! Welcome!"

CHAPTER VIII

FIVE MONTHS IN ENGLAND

THE five months Thomas Spurgeon spent in England in 1884 were almost incessantly occupied by preaching and lecturing on behalf of the Auckland Tabernacle. He occupied the pulpit at the Tabernacle in London on many occasions, and some of his sermons are embodied in his first book, which was issued on the eve of his return—*The Gospel of the Grace of God.* "These sermons," says his father in the preface, "have given great delight to the friends at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. From Brighter Britain our son has come to visit us in our best weather, but when the first frosts and fogs of winter surround our misty isle he must be gone, like the swallows, to a sunnier clime." The preacher's simple and picturesque style will be understood by the following examples :

"I heard it said the other day, in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, that when God made the world, He did not wind it up like a watch, and then put it under His pillow and go to sleep. Not He, indeed. He made it, and then set it agoing, but He still

directs its course, and regulates its forces, 'upholding all things by the word of His power.'

"'He rides upon the stormy wind,
And manages the seas.'"

"Do you notice how the Lord takes unbelieving prayers and transforms them into assurances to stimulate and increase feeble faith? As He treated this poor suppliant, so does He in mercy deal with us. For instance, I say to Him, 'Lord, is it possible, can it be, that such a sinner as I, on whose black list well-nigh every imaginable sin is chronicled, should be washed whiter than snow?' Then listening for the answer from the mercy-seat, I hear the assuring echo, 'Whiter than snow.' 'But, Lord, I am one of those who have sinned against light and knowledge. A mother's tears have bedewed my head as I knelt at her knee. A father's counsels, a pastor's pleadings, and many a heaven-sent message have remained unheeded. My sin is aggravated and inexcusable. Can it be that there is mercy for the vilest?' And, listening once again, the ear of faith catches the sweet voice that sounds aloud from Calvary, 'Mercy for the vilest.' 'Ah, Lord, it seems too good to be true. I can scarcely credit that it is possible' Hark how the everlasting hills echo and re-echo the assurance, 'It is possible! It is possible!'"

"The natives of Australia were very much surprised the first time they saw a man on horseback. They had seen a horse before, and they had seen a man before, but they had never seen a man and a horse together before. They fancied that some

unheard-of monster was coming upon them, which in the distance looked like a gigantic emu. But when the apparition drew near, and they perceived that the creature resolved itself into man and horse, their fears were allayed. The reason why the doctrines of Divine sovereignty and human responsibility appear so inconsistent to some is, that they are not regarded as quite distinct: the one being as far above the other as man is superior to the horse. They were made to go together, though they can never be one. No one would think of reconciling steed and rider. Seek not to reconcile these doctrines. Give each its proper position, and grace and wisdom appear, instead of inconsistency and partiality. Assign to God the honour that is due to His name, and the right to choose and to refuse, and at the same time feel that thou thyself art answerable for all that thou dost or dost not do. Then, and only then, the mystery is solved."

"But, alas, I must confess that in New Zealand, as well as in Old England, there are many who, though they hear it, do not hearken to it. I will try to show you the difference. We have in the Colonies a custom in connection with the Fire Brigade which will illustrate my point. The city is divided into numbered wards, and when the alarm has been sounded, the bell tolls out the number of the ward in which the conflagration has occurred. By this arrangement those who are from home, attending a service or visiting their friends, are informed of the locality of the fire. Suppose the system could be amplified, so that every street and each house were indicated; what eager listening

there would be ! When the bell had finished clanging its alarm, would not every householder count the strokes ? and he who heard the number of his house sounded out, would have wings to his heels immediately, and rush away to save his children and his goods from the fiery element. Now, it is when the Gospel comes home to a man like that—when he hears his number rung out, and feels that his soul is in danger of eternal burning—when the finger of God points at him as Nathan's did at David, and a stern voice declares 'Thou art the man'—then it is that he has given up hearing for hearkening, and hearkening becomes equivalent to obeying. Then he hastens to the Saviour, saying 'I flee unto Thee to hide me.' "

In subsequent Tabernacle sermons he often reverted to his experiences on the other side of the world, and the extracts which follow will show how his later style developed.

"I remember seeing on a remarkably quiet morning in the Southern Seas, sun, moon and stars all shining together. Perhaps it is not such an uncommon sight as I have supposed. To me it was novel, and all was so bright and beautiful that the vision of it remains with me to this day. The sun had only lately risen from the sea. The moon, well orbed, with silvery light, was doing her best to shine, even though her stronger rival had entered into competition, and clustering close to them was a certain lustrous star, bright even in the opening day. I find, in God's Word, lights of various de-

grees, stars of different magnitudes. Sun, moon and stars combine to gladden the devout reader. The light is the same throughout."

"I remember sailing upon a wonderful lake in New Zealand; the water of this lake is icy cold and of a deep blue colour, but the strange peculiarity of these dreadful waters is that men who have lost their lives there—and there have been many accidents, for it is a stormy lake—have never, never come back again. I mean, that their bodies having sunk into the water have never reappeared. The reason I do not know, but so it is; and I am glad to think that into such a sea as that, God Almighty in His omnipotent love has cast my sin and yours, so that they shall never trouble me any more."

"You know I used to live a few years ago in the city of Auckland, New Zealand. Well, out away in the distant suburbs of that city was the most wonderful bridge I have ever seen in my life, and I do not care if I never see another like it. There had been some difficulty between the two vestries, or parishes, or whatever they called them there. There was a short space of water, and the land on that side belonged to one county or company, and the land on this side to another. They could not come to terms—not as to the building of the bridge, but about the finishing of it. I do not know how it happened, but so it was, that on the further side were several arches or spans of the bridge, and on this side just as many, but the one that should have joined them was missing; and there it stood for many a year, and stands still—stands still in more

than one sense—even to this day, for aught I know, a mockery, a vanity, because it has never been completed."

His lecture on "Brighter Britain" seems to have been most popular wherever it was given. In London it drew a large audience, and his father, who presided, provided a pleasant interlude in which he described his own congregation. "He knew them on Sunday when they were going to the Tabernacle. There was a different kind of walk about them from that of other people. He saw good people going along so (imitating their walk amidst much laughter). They were going to church or somewhere, and they went slowly, as if they had plenty of time and there was plenty of room when they got there. But his own people came trotting along quick (imitating them also amid roars of laughter). They knew that unless they got there in time they would not get there at all."

Early in December, at the annual meeting of the Pastors' College, Mr. Thomas Spurgeon was received with a long ovation of cheers and waving of handkerchiefs. He told the people that this homecoming had been one of the happiest seasons in his life. Altogether since his return he had received £2,500. He had not got all that he wanted, as whoever knew a Spurgeon that had? His brother's people at Greenwich had given him a clock to keep Greenwich time, and his father had given him the old Bible that he had preached out of in Park Street Chapel, while the Tabernacle

friends had given him a Communion service for his new Tabernacle in Auckland.

On December 12th, 1884, he set sail in the *Liguria*, his father having bid him not to return again, for he could never bear the pain of another parting. Yet many and many a time thereafter he longed for his return.

During this voyage he had two travelling companions, Mr. H. H. Driver, who was returning to New Zealand after his course at the Pastors' College, and Mr. J. R. Cooper, who had been selected by C. H. S. to take charge of the new church at Perth in Tasmania. Mr. Cooper has been good enough to recall some of the experiences of the voyage. He took his bride with him, and Mr. Driver shared the cabin with Mr. Spurgeon. "We had much happy fellowship, and his gentle kindly way made him a favourite with those whose goodwill was to be welcomed. It was our custom to join in devotional fellowship day by day in Tom's cabin. The four of us read together a Psalm and then the exposition of it from *The Treasury of David*. At Naples fortune favoured us—we were able to spend eight hours ashore."

A descriptive article, "Christmas in the Canal," is to be found in the 1885 volume of *The Sword and Trowel* from the pen of T. S. "So lovely a morning I have seldom seen; even Australia and New Zealand could scarcely rival it. Happy children romped about us with the presents Santa Claus had placed in their hung-up stockings."

They arrived at Adelaide on January 20th, 1885, and were heartily welcomed, as also at Melbourne,

and as the Tasmanian boat did not leave till after the Sunday they all three preached in different churches in the city. Mr. Gibson, his son, and all the Baptist ministers of the Island welcomed them to Tasmania. Mr. Spurgeon saw the newly married couple safely installed in their manse, and then continued the journey to New Zealand. Writing to Mr. Cooper on February 12th, 1885, he gives him such advice as might have come from a Bishop, and asks for a letter of cheer from time to time. In response to such a letter he wrote from Auckland on January 29th, 1889: "It is really good news you give me of yourself. Do you know I almost feel inclined to envy you. A hundred times I have wished to be out of the forefront in some smaller and quieter sphere where peace and quietness might be possible. Yet doubtless the Lord placed me here, and I must tarry till He moves me. Our little one rejoices in the name of 'Daisy,' her full title being Marguerite May. She is, I rejoice to add, very well, and of course superlatively lovely in her parents' eyes." But that is anticipating.

CHAPTER IX

AUCKLAND TABERNACLE

FROM Adelaide Mr. Spurgeon lost no time in sending a message to the Church at Auckland. A paragraph went the round of the New Zealand papers to the effect that amongst the cable officials his ingenuity in squeezing a pastoral on the ten-words minimum tariff was regarded as a very astute idea; the message when written out in full extended to no less than seventeen lines. It was reported that when the message was read the following Sunday by Rev. W. E. Rice, who had occupied Mr. Spurgeon's place during his absence, a smile flickered across the congregation at "seeing so much theology covered by seven shillings." The cable ran, "Romans first eight twelve Second Corinthians first eleven." It may be worth while to quote the Scriptures; their appropriateness will be self-evident.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers: making request, if by any means

now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."

In that spirit pastor and people met. On March 1st, 1885, a soirée was held in the Choral Hall to bid him welcome, and also to say farewell to Mr. Rice, who, at his father's request, had come from England to Auckland to shepherd the church during the pastor's absence. Mr. Spurgeon had promised to send a "first-rate man," and amid great cheering that estimate was endorsed by the meeting. The Church, which numbered 650 members, presented Mr. Rice with a testimonial and very heartily welcomed Mr. Spurgeon.

As to the new Tabernacle, "long after the hoped-for time, and far beyond our anticipated cost, the building was complete in all its most important portions late in April. There remained another £1,000 to raise," Mr. Spurgeon continues in an article written about that time, "and our hearts rise to our rich Banker for this last overdraft. At length, money or no money, we fixed the day of the opening. On Sunday, May 10th, we said farewell to the wooden tenement, which for eight and twenty years had braved the battle (of the elements) and the breeze. Our friend Mr. Cornford, for five

and twenty years the pastor of this people, was the preacher. He revived old memories by preaching the old Gospel. At night the Choral Hall was 'farewelled,' a great crowd gathering to pay its last respects to a place hallowed by sacred associations and sweet experiences."

The building was opened free of debt. "Even now I find it difficult," the pastor writes, "to credit that in a few years we have succeeded in obtaining nearly an acre of land, with two houses on it, one of them an almshouse and the other for the chapel keeper, and our new House of Prayer, and still have enough ground remaining to realize between two thousand and three thousand pounds, but destined, I trust, to accommodate some other Institution to our Saviour's praise. The shrewdest heads among us could hardly have 'seen their way' to such a scheme, but we have had a Managing Director whose thoughts are higher than ours. All glory be to His holy name." This familiarity of faith is recorded with the utmost reverence, albeit with primitive simplicity.

Tuesday, May 12th, 1885, was the day of the opening service. The Tabernacle, which actually cost £14,628, is a building which accommodates 1,200 worshippers, and "the interior presents an aspect of elegance, of commodiousness, and of solidity." As one of the Auckland newspapers puts it, it is "a credit to the denomination to which it belongs, an ornament to the city, and an enduring monument to the self-devotion and energy of the gifted young preacher who initiated the enterprise and has carried it out to successful fruition." On

the opening day the utmost enthusiasm prevailed amongst the people. "They rejoiced to enter the building not alone as their gift to God, but as His gift to them. It was meet that the first sounds heard within the walls when the people assembled for the first service should be the familiar strains of the Doxology." The sermon Mr. Spurgeon then preached on "Hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place," as well as the sermon of the following Sunday, "True Worship," was afterwards published in exactly the same form and type as his father's sermons. The three thoughts of the first sermon were given in the hymn which Mr. Spurgeon had written for the occasion, two verses of which are—

The "HOUSE OF GOD" henceforth
Shall be its sacred name;
A monument to prayer, it must
A "HOUSE OF PRAYER" remain.

Yet one more boon we crave,
May many through Thy grace,
That this a "HOUSE OF MERCY" prove,
Be born within this place.

Meeting followed meeting during the week, and on Sunday, May 17th, thronged services were held, a crowd of 1,700 people being accommodated in the evening.

The next two or three years were of unexampled prosperity in the Church life. In the address prefaced to the Report of July 1886, the Pastor, pausing at the milestone, says: "How about the next mile? Can we not adopt a pace at once more

swift and more steady than before ? May we not hope to keep more directly in the straight line, that is, with less waste of energy and fewer wanderings ? Will it not be our happy privilege to gain more companions on the road ? And shall it not be said of us, more truly than before, that we have laid aside every weight ? Thus pausing by the way, we hear the distant bells which chime of stronger zeal, and firmer faith, more fervent faith, holier living, and more spiritual power."

On the copy which has come into my hand a traveller has made the note, " The most flourishing Church I have visited in the colonies. A great family likeness to his father in the Pastor."

Once a year the said pastor provided a social evening for the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society, and on August 31st we find him rendering his own poem " In Perils on the Sea," the most ambitious of his poems, published that year in a separate form. The following extract will show its strength.

But what of Paul ? Methinks I saw him leap
Among the first to swim, for in the deep
He'd spent a night and day, and thrice before
Had suffered shipwreck on a storm-beat shore.
Upborne by faith as well as strength and skill,
He battles with the surging surf, until
A kindly billow takes him in its reach,
And casts him pale and panting on the beach.
With scarce a moment's rest, behold he strives—
His own life saved—to rescue other lives ;
Anon he shouts a word of cheerfulness
To yonder sufferers in dire distress ;
Anon he bends to chafe some ice-cold form,
Or snatches other trophies from the storm,

Breast-high he ventures in, and bravely saves
Exhausted strugglers from the refluent waves.
All things to all these men he has become,
If he by all means may deliver some.
Nay, nay; not *some* alone, but ALL, for so
Jehovah's angel pledged a week ago!
No sailor lost, and not one soldier drowned,
The passengers all saved, the prisoners found.
Close on three hundred souls—a hapless host—
Stand safe, though shiv'ring on Melita's coast!

What holy gladness fills the eyes of Paul;
As answers to his prayer he views them all;
His joy—though stained with blood, or salt with sea,
His crown—or Jew or Gentile, bond or free!

On November 6th of the same year, C. H. Spurgeon, leaving his London congregation for a spell in the south of France, writes a pastoral, and on the back of it there is printed for the first time the hymn "All of Grace," suggested by his father's book with that title, perhaps the finest of Thomas Spurgeon's poetic writings, certainly the one which has gained most acceptance.

"'All of grace'—from base to summit,
Grace on every course and stone;
Grace in planning, rearing, crowning,
Sovereign grace, and grace alone!

"'All of grace'—from keel to topmast,
Grace the hull and spars has wrought;
Grace designing, building, launching,
Grace unaided, grace unsought!

"Grace primeval! grace eternal!
Grace foreknows, and grace elects;
Grace provides a full salvation,
Grace the rebel heart affects.

" ' All of grace '—for useless strivings
Perfect pardon's sweet content!
Light and life for death and darkness!
' All of grace ' omnipotent!

" Grace bids Christian quit Destruction,
Leads him to the Crucified;
Brings to Beulah, helps o'er Jordan,
Welcomes on the other side!

" ' Grace for grace,' and ' Grace sufficient,'
' Grace abounding,' ' Grace that reigns,'
Grace the guarantee of glory!
Grace! Grace! Grace! How sweet the strains!

CHORUS

" ' All of Grace,' oh! ' All of grace,'
' Not of works lest man should boast,'
Frank forgiveness suits the vilest!
Largest debtors love the most!"

From a long report in *The New Zealand Baptist* by a visitor to Auckland we find that the success of the earlier years was well maintained. " The Auckland Tabernacle," it says, " is erected in a most commanding position, and can be seen from most parts of the city and suburbs. As we neared the church we found a stream of people from city and suburb all bound for the same place, and we were forcibly reminded of many visits to the London Tabernacle." Then follows a realistic description of what was evidently a service full of power. " In three minutes the Tabernacle was empty owing to the excellent arrangements, and the writer was on his way home deeply grateful to God that such men as C. H. Spurgeon and his twin sons rejoiced to

preach the old-fashioned gospel in a plain, homely way that reaches the hearts of the people."

Rev. J. D. Gilmore on his return to New Zealand from the Pastors' College, was invited by Mr. Spurgeon to be his guest and spend several weeks with him in his bachelor home in Mount Albert. "At his suggestion," Mr. Gilmore says, "I preached at Ponsonby, and became Pastor of the church, so I was his near neighbour for seven years. At the time I was in his house he had a dog called Flirt, well-named, for she transferred her affections to me.

"I went over to the Tabernacle one evening for a Baptism. As we were going on the platform we passed a young woman in the corridor, and Mr. Spurgeon, always courteous, stopped and spoke to her. 'You are not a member with us, I think,' he said. To which she replied, 'Oh, no, I belong to the Gathered-Outs.' At once Mr. Spurgeon responded, 'Do you indeed? I belong to the Gathered-Ins.' He was always quick at repartee; once when I wrote asking if he were better, he answered, 'Thanks, I am not altogether well yet, but I am much better than I was when I was worse than I am now.'

The Headmaster of the High School at Auckland regularly took a class of his boys to the Tabernacle simply to hear Mr. Spurgeon read the Scriptures, he considered the enunciation to be so fine. One Saturday afternoon he took those same boys up to Mount Eden, an extinct volcano outside Auckland, and got them to write an essay on their experience. One answer Mr. Spurgeon afterwards used as an illustration of looking for God in the wrong way:

the boy had written, " And when we got to the top we saw the great creator ! "

One evening Mr. Spurgeon was to be the principal speaker at a big Temperance demonstration held in a large building with a corrugated iron roof. Just as the meeting was about to commence, a thunderstorm burst and the rain came down in torrents. As it was impossible to give an address, Mr. Spurgeon, equal to the occasion, said, " My friends, I have never spoken against water in my life, and I do not intend doing so to-night."

Rev. W. S. Potter, sometime his neighbour in Auckland, in an appreciative letter says : " During his single days I occasionally visited him, and he never allowed me to leave without praying with me : once when I was in trouble he said in his prayer, ' O Lord, we know Thou wilt help us in our troubles or help us out of them.' On two occasions when he found himself too ill to conduct the service in the Choral Hall I took it for him.

" When I removed to the Thames, the mining there had largely failed. During a visit to Auckland Mr. Spurgeon inquired about my work and when I suggested that he might come and give us a lecture, he said, ' I will right heartily.' His lecture on ' The Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth ' so stirred the people that they gave nearly £7. Then at the close of the meeting he asked the people to buy his book *The Gospel of the Grace of God*, and the ' annual report of his mother's Book Fund,' and another £6 was raised, not one penny of which would he take for himself. His steamboat expenses were considerable ;

so I wrote a letter expressing my thanks, enclosing £1 to cover his expenses, and gave it to him just as the steamer was moving. He opened it, and quickly rolled up the note in the envelope and threw it at me on the wharf.

" Eight years ago I was in London, but he was in Switzerland. On his return he arranged for Mrs. Potter and me to spend a day in Slough. It was one of the happiest days I have spent in my life. He took us to the church of which ' Gray's Elegy ' is written, and through Burnham Beeches, but the real joy of the visit was Mr. Spurgeon himself. I felt he was conferring a great favour on me, and yet he put it all the other way, and bringing his hand down warmly on mine, he said, ' You dear old fellow to give me this happy day.' "

The event which makes the year 1888 memorable was the marriage of Mr. Spurgeon on February 10th to Miss Lila Rutherford, at Hanover Street, Dunedin. Already we have seen his friendship with the family from his earliest days in Australia, and have noted the removal of Mr. Gideon Rutherford to New Zealand, and Mr. Spurgeon's sojourn in the home there before his settlement in Auckland. The friendship was not confined to the younger people, for on September 1st, 1881, C. H. Spurgeon writes to his son, " Do give my love to Mr. Rutherford. The thought of him touches my heart. May the Lord bless all the children, and sanctify family sorrows ! I wish I could go to Australia or New Zealand if it were only for the sake of seeing that loving friend."

It may not be out of place here to transcribe

some half-playful references in the father's letters to "Son Tom" on the question of marriage. At least three times he gave him the opportunity of opening his heart on the matter. One letter, dated "Sweet Home, March 15th," says, "I half suspect you are getting fond of some Australian girl, for you have written a great deal about a certain *Victoria*, but then there was almost as much about *Adelaide*. I hope you have not two strings to your bow, and yet you write very lovingly about both. Mind your heart, my boy, or it will be gone before you know it." And on September 1st, 1881, he writes, "When you see a lady of your own age who is at all like what your mother *was*, be sure to pop the question at once. If you get her and she lives to be what your dear mother *is*, you will lament her weakness and yet reckon her to be better than the strongest of women." In another letter referring to Brother Charles, the father says, "I fancy he will soon be wanting to be tied to the stake which he now leans upon very tenderly."

It was in 1886 that Miss Rutherford and Mr. Spurgeon, who had long been drawn towards each other, became formally engaged. They had thereafter frequent opportunity of meeting, for an attack of rheumatic fever compelled his fiancée to go to the North Island for treatment at the Hot Springs, about forty miles from Auckland. Mr. Rutherford found here, with his gun, enough to occupy his attention, but the young people did not accompany him on his shooting expeditions.

Needless to say the wedding, which was conducted by Mr. North at Hanover Street Chapel,

was quite an event in Dunedin. Many were unable to gain admission to the crowded church, and expressions of goodwill on the occasion abounded. The marriage was ideally happy, the qualities of husband and wife balancing and perfecting each other, and their mutual love and devotion growing with the years. After their honeymoon they settled in Auckland at Remuera, about three miles from the Tabernacle. A letter written to his father soon afterwards will best give the colour of the moment. It is dated March 22nd, 1888.

"My own Dear Father,

"How can I thank you for the kind letter you wrote me from Mentone? I had been expecting it ere it arrived. My hopes were high. I knew that kind love and wise counsel would be in it, but I scarcely ventured to hope for so much of both. And as for your good gift to mark my marriage and feather the nest, I had never so much as dreamed of such a thing. A thousand thanks for your gracious generosity. . . .

"I thought you would rejoice that George Müller was at our wedding. I count it no small matter to have had a seat on Dr. Brock's knee (I remember it so well), and his presence at our baptism, to have had also Dr. Moffat's hand upon my head while he prayed our father's God to bless us, and to have had George Müller's presence and prayer at our nuptials.

"Better than all three put together is the constant blessing of having *you* as both Father and Friend. How I have sympathized with you lately

—for though you are on the winning side the strife must be sore. Thousands rejoice in you and plead for you. I wish I could tell you all dear Mr. Müller said about the conflict, and convey, as it should be conveyed, his 'dear love' to his 'pelov'd brudder.'

"My love and esteem for you can never die or even wane, but this seems poor return for all your goodness. Such as I have give I thee. If I could help you anyhow, holding the horses, or carrying the whip, or scraping the plough, it would be all too great an honour.

"With heartiest love and gratitude,

"I am your fond and faithful,

"SON TOM."

As a wedding gift the church presented Mr. Spurgeon with a writing-table, a replica of one that the New Zealand people gave to the Pope; in fact, Mr. Spurgeon received the one made for the Pope, and the Pope got the one begun for Mr. Spurgeon, which was not finished in time for the presentation. It is in the London home to-day—a very fine piece of furniture. At the same time a large china cabinet made of all the different sorts of wood grown in New Zealand was presented to Mrs. Spurgeon: that also graces the London home, and is an object of great interest to visitors.

On Christmas Day 1888, a little daughter—Daisy—came as God's good gift to the home, but in March she was gone. The sorrowing parents had no picture of her, save the image engraven on their hearts, for the intention of having a photograph taken was postponed until she should have

been a little older. For this the father never quite forgave himself, he had been so engrossed in the work of the Church that he had not noted the passage of the months. His own sorrow made him very sympathetic with others. Long afterwards he wrote:

"Have some of my readers lost their little ones? Then hear me, for I too have walked that Via Dolorosa. A certain well-loved text hung on my study-wall, illuminated by my own hand. I little thought, as I drew the letters and gilded the capitals, that the words would have a very literal fulfilment. But I knew it ere the blossom fell. She had been sick a little while, and none could tell how it might end. As I hoped, and feared, the truth leapt from the wall right into my heart, in the twinkling of an eye: 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me.' Soon after that my firstborn was with the angels. Then, once more 'was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning.' Did we do wrong to grieve? Is weeping sin? Nay, nay; for 'Jesus wept.' But we did not sorrow as those without hope; we did not refuse to be comforted. I own no foot of land save a little plot in an Auckland cemetery, and there, beneath a drooping acacia, is a little shell-strewn mound, and a simple stone with this inscription—

DAISY SPURGEON,

AGED 3 MONTHS.

"Even so, Father . . ."

"My sorrowing friend, write 'Even so, Father' on your gravestones. Your little ones are 'gone before.' Do not push away the pierced hand that holds the kerchief of consolation to your streaming eyes. I pray you, refuse not to be comforted. 'The Spirit and the Bride say Come,' and if your tear-dimmed eyes prevent you coming to the Comforter, remember He is called the Paraclete. He will come to you, if you will call to Him."

The death of his child brought to a crisis the fear that had been growing for some time that his health was not equal to the strain of the great church—the largest in Australasia—that was now his care; so in the month of June he declared his intention of resigning the pastorate. *The Leader* of June 7th, 1889, wrote: "The announcement of Pastor Spurgeon's determination to resign the pastorate of the Baptist Tabernacle at Auckland, in consequence of failing health, has caused very great regret, not only amongst the members of his own denomination, but amongst all sections of the Church of Christ. It is acknowledged, even by those who have not seen eye to eye with Mr. Spurgeon, that he has evinced no ordinary ability and devotion in welding the Baptist body in this city into its present compact form. It is due to his zeal, piety and pulpit oratory that his church has attained to the efficiency which has made it such a potent influence for good on the community." And so on for a column.

On June 10th, at a meeting of the Church, with much regret the decision was taken as final, Mr.

Spurgeon not being willing to accept the alternative of a prolonged holiday, but expressing his willingness to remain until the end of the year. His father and Dr. Maclaren were empowered to choose a successor, and Mr. William Birch was sent out to what proved a somewhat unbalanced pastorate. But that does not concern us here. More to the point is Thomas Spurgeon's letter to his father, dated June 17th, 1889, in which amongst other things he says :

" This mail will bring you tidings of my resignation, if you have not heard of it previously. I meant to send you a copy of my letter to the Church, but have not time to write it. But it is perhaps as well not to bother you. I gave two reasons. One was that I did not feel ' able ' enough to do justice to all the work, and the other was that for some long time the blessing seemed to have been withheld and the church was not prospering as it should. I further intimated that my inability to visit all the folk and personally to superintend all the efforts was partly accountable for the lack of success. I therefore asked to be released from the too heavy burdens at the end of November.

" I found it sad work to do this, but I had the assurance ere I did it that it *should* be, and I am more and more convinced that I have acted rightly. If I were well and strong I would delight to remain, or if I got so by and by I would not object to return. But the furlough which was kindly offered, and the assistant suggested, did not meet the case. I am sure it is best to secure a successor.

"I have no hesitation in saying that the sphere is a good one and some of the best of men and women are here. As to myself I have the vaguest of plans. Invitations are coming to me already, but cannot be accepted. I think of going to Mr. Gibson after our Union meetings in December, of resting there a while, and then of helping the churches in Tasmania. It may be that I visit the other colonies too. I feel sure that the way will open, for in no matter of my life have I more earnestly sought direction than in this. The utmost grief prevails here, and throughout the colony, at my decision, though there are some few who look at the case somewhat as I do and, regretting it like myself, they judge that I have acted the wise and honest part. I hope therefore you will not grieve over it. I shall keenly feel the parting, yet cannot help being glad to be relieved of the burden."

On November 3rd Mr. Spurgeon preached his farewell sermon. Of the service *The Leader* of November 8th says: "It is not difficult to account for Mr. Spurgeon's popularity and power. We noticed members of the Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregational, and other churches present, and have no doubt that the young preacher's blameless life, elocutionary power, clear enunciation, good memory, and above all his clear and fearless preaching of the old Gospel story of man the sinner and Christ the Saviour, account for Mr. Spurgeon's hold on such vast numbers. Auckland people would soon see through and rip up sham and humbug. Any young man who can therefore pass through

the ordeal which Thomas Spurgeon has stood during the eight years he has ministered at the Tabernacle, must have some grit in him. Envious detractors said when he came here that ' his father's name and fame do it,' but being in no way connected with Mr. Spurgeon's church we can give an unbiassed opinion, and we must say that he has proved by his ministry here that he is a manly man, a sterling preacher of no mean order, and that if his name were Tom Jones his genuine ability and aptness to preach would have placed him where he is now—in the front rank of all the preachers in Auckland."

The next evening a farewell soirée was held when addresses were presented from the Church, the Auckland Ministers' Association, and the Young Men's Christian Association. Mr. Spurgeon had a great ovation, and presented the Church with a pulpit Bible to replace the one his father had presented to him, which he had hitherto used. So closed a ministry that has left an impress on the Colony that remains to this day. During the month of December Mr Spurgeon supplied the pulpit at Dunedin, and on January 23rd, 1890, he left New Zealand for Tasmania, " having given much of the red blood of his youth to the city by the *Waitemata*," and even on his departure being retained as Pastor Emeritus by the Church at the Tabernacle.

CHAPTER X

THE EVANGELIST

On January 27th, 1890, Mr. and Mrs. Spurgeon arrived in the s.s. *Rotomahana* at Tasmania, where for some months they were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Gibson at Native Point. Here they rested for some weeks. On March 16th, Mr. Spurgeon preached at Longford, the following Sunday at Launceston, giving his lecture on "The Apostle of Burmah" on the Tuesday, and at Hobart on the following Friday. Influenza caused a break, but in April he preached the Association Sermon for the Baptist Union of Tasmania at Launceston, and we find him also at Latrobe, Devonport, and Perth. In May he was again at Launceston, and on the last day of that month he left Tasmania, having accepted the proposal of the Baptist Union of New Zealand, made at its meetings in Dunedin on the previous December 10th, that he should devote himself to evangelistic work in the Islands.

In *The New Zealand Baptist* he writes: "Towards the end of my furlough I was led to Victoria, and there received much spiritual stimulus. At the closing meeting of the half-yearly session of the Baptist Union I solicited the prayerful sympathy of the brethren on my own behalf and for the work.

I am not likely to forget the gathering amid the gums of Ocean Grove, when men full of faith pleaded that God would endue me with power and abundantly bless my testimony in New Zealand. I humbly believe that the prayer was answered then and there. So great was the interest that several of the leading ministers voluntarily pledged themselves to lay our work before their prayer meetings week by week. I love to think that in Launceston, Geelong and Melbourne those who have the ear of the King are pleading our cause—His, rather, for we are co-workers together with God."

In a letter to Mr. T. Batts, kindly forwarded by his daughter Mrs. C. R. Macdonald, Mr. Spurgeon writes from Tasmania on February 10th, 1890, and states his attitude to certain doctrines which his successor in Auckland Tabernacle was preaching. The extract is interesting in view of the new service which awaited him: "The best way to proclaim holiness is to preach the doctrines of grace (so I think) and to exhort to Christlikeness. All boasting about perfection is anti-scriptural. Christ drew lessons from sparrows and ravens but not from peacocks. They are mentioned in the Bible I know, but in the society of apes. May the Lord direct his heart to something more practical and scriptural, for I fear me that those who get so quickly to the top of the ladder will have to step painfully down or else tumble over on the other side."

For eighteen months this evangelistic work continued with signs of blessing everywhere. While these words are being written frequent letters are being received from New Zealand recalling the grace

of them—"Those were grand days"; "The best workers are the people brought in then"; "His ministry is bearing fruit to-day," is the testimony from place after place. Mrs. Spurgeon accompanied her husband in these journeys as long as she could. Travelling was difficult, for out-of-the-way places were visited; often the journeys had to be undertaken by springless carts, over the roughest of roads, and frequently on horseback. The accommodation, always kindly, was often primitive, meals served on a clothless table with the men sitting down in their shirt-sleeves. But the intrepid couple only laughed at their hardships, saw the best side of everything, and endeared themselves very greatly to the people wherever they went.

In *The Sword and Trowel* for 1890 and 1891 there are very readable accounts from Mr. Spurgeon's own pen of the places he visited. From these and from newspaper extracts, happily preserved, can be gleaned the following particulars.

Invercargill, where the mission work began, was reached on June 3rd after a tempestuous voyage; and on the following two Sundays and on the days between, services were held deepening in power each day, and culminating at a great meeting in the Theatre. "The population of Invercargill is essentially Scotch. At every street corner you may hear the Scotch bodies 'crackin' awa'' in their broadest brogues, and two or three Kirks proclaim that the majority of the folk thereabout are of the Presbyterian persuasion." Of the outcome of the meetings the missioner wisely writes: "Without tabulating results—for who can

tell whither the blessing tends, much less where it ends ?—I may say that God gave us to see signs following, and assured us that a glad key-note had been struck for a mission which, with His blessing, cannot fail to be an anthem full of praise to the Lord of love."

The next centre was CAVERSHAM, and to reach it a severe winter journey had to be undertaken—it seems strange to think of winter in June. The pastor there was a son of Howard Hinton; and Charles Carter, famous in Ceylon in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society, had been a previous minister of the church. Of the special services a friend reports that it was—

> Christ first, Christ last, Christ all day long,
> My strength, my glory, and my song.

And *The New Zealand Baptist* is constrained to write: "Better work the Union never did than when it committed itself to this evangelistic campaign."

MOSGIEL, visited during the first fortnight in July, yielded some fifty confessors of faith. "More inspiring meetings I never attended, more interested hearers I never addressed."

The rest of July was given to OAMURU, which is to be pronounced Wom-ā-roo. "A native name of course; but an easy one to pronounce. What say you to Whakarewarewa or Nihootekisse, or Tapuacharuru ?" The town stands on the east coast of the South Island, about seventy miles north of Dunedin. Here the experience of the previous missions was repeated.

A hundred miles further north is ASHBURTON,

"Here's your fishing-rod, sir," said a voice behind me as I was about to take my seat in the train, and two sticks and a small parcel were handed to the departing Evangelist. The apparatus turned out to be a calico sign, with hems to take the eight-feet sticks, and the announcement on it "Spurgeon's Mission. To-night at 7.30." "Alas! that this fresh fishing-ground yielded little," writes the Missioner. "For six nights the Gospel was proclaimed, yet only a few submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."

The next mission was held at SYDENHAM at the end of August, but it was somewhat hindered by labour troubles, and the unrest made it difficult to get away to the next place. With a scratch crew the steamer started, but owing to a storm it was not able to get beyond Picton; thence the next morning train was taken to Blenheim, and then an eighty-mile road journey had to be undertaken in a two-horse buggy. This drive through Marlborough and Havelock occupied two days, and at length the travellers arrived just in time at NELSON. "The town lies embosomed amidst verdant hills, and is remarkable for its well-kept gardens and prolific orchards. This sheltered spot enjoys a climate of the mildest sort. A more charming place of residence can hardly be imagined. It is perhaps the healthiest place in the colony." Here the services were excellent, as they also were at RICHMOND, the next town visited. Thence, crossing the Straits to Wellington, the journey was continued to WANGANUI, where the results were meagre. "Nevertheless, some of the fruit

fell at the shaking of the tree, and perhaps more of it was helped in ripening for a harvest to be revealed."

At WELLINGTON, the Empire city, in spite of the weather and the Wild West Show pitched immediately opposite the church, good meetings gathered, and the Evangelist was glad to work alongside the Pastor, Mr. H. H. Driver, who had been one of his ship companions in the voyage of 1885. A journey of two hundred miles brought him to NAPIER and to another happy mission, in which the sympathy of all the churches of the town was freely given. Toward the end of the year 1890 a mission was held at THE CATLINS—Owaki and Puerua, where in addition to the white people there is a Maori settlement, and nearly all the score or so are consistent Christians. "How eagerly these dark-skins listened to the message—they said they understood it too, and how heartily they sang!" Toward the close of the mission "just where a little creek loses itself in the infinite main, four daughters of my Puerua host confessed 'Jesus as Lord,' while some who witnessed their bold profession were, I trust, resolved to follow their example, and Christ's, ere long. As this was the first occasion on which I had administered this ordinance out in the open, it had a peculiar interest for me."

In quick succession came visits to CANTERBURY, OXFORD, KIRWEE and CHRISTCHURCH. At Kirwee "a clergyman, having arranged for a concert and a dance (dancing is one of the curses of these up-country townships), was not a little dismayed that

the fiddlers who generally supplied the music had been converted and declined to attend."

Great blessing rested upon the mission at DUNEDIN, " Not only scores, but hundreds, have received Christ as their Saviour," said *The New Zealand Baptist.* There were, as a result, forty-eight baptisms the following month. Similar grace seems to have rested on the meetings at PONSONBY during the latter part of June.

On July 2nd, 1891, Thomas Harold Spurgeon was born at Auckland, and later in the month his father was at THAMES, the workers in the Sunday schools of the town largely rejoicing in the result of his labours. During August the churches in the neighbourhood of AUCKLAND were visited, including the Tabernacle, where the former Pastor baptized nineteen candidates during his visit. LINCOLN, GREENDALE, MALVERN and CAVERSHAM followed in quick succession, and so ended the year, and the eighteen months of evangelistic ministry.

In a little book the names of seven hundred and seventy-six persons are noted as fruits of the missions, to be remembered and prayed over as the days went on.

Several churches during these months invited Mr. Spurgeon to accept the pastorate, including his old church in Auckland. To all of them he turned a deaf ear. Overtures were also made to him to conduct similar services in Australia, but events were hastening on which changed the whole course of his ministry.

CHAPTER XI

THE TABERNACLE TEMPEST

THE family history in England was rapidly reaching a climax. Spurgeon was ill. Painful illness had often been his lot before, but this was recognized as serious. Clouds were over Westwood, over the Tabernacle, and over all Evangelical Christendom. The clouds grew darker and it seemed as if the storm must break, when, doubtless in answer to prayer as well as in response to skill and affection, the sun shone through and health seemed again in sight. But it was only an interlude, a bright and lovely interlude; then the darkness gathered once more, and on the morning of the first day of February, eighteen hundred and ninety-two, the world learned that the prophet of the Lord had passed. Many of the contents-bills of the newspapers had only one item upon them that morning—"Death of Spurgeon." People paused as if stunned, and tears coursed down unaccustomed cheeks. There has been nothing to compare with it save the afternoon when another generation read the news-lines—"Death of Kitchener." In both cases a star had fallen from the sky, and the powers of heaven were shaken.

Now for the details of the story. Early in May

Spurgeon was taken ill, but he struggled on, preaching occasionally, until the first Sunday in June. That was the last time he was in the Tabernacle. Perhaps I may be permitted to recount the incidents from my own standpoint, as it all came home to me in an unexpected way.

There were two immediate difficulties flowing from the illness, which, of course, was itself the greatest difficulty of all. The first concerned the empty pulpit which, for a while, was well supplied by trusted ministers; the second, the wider ministry of the printed sermons. Happily, Mrs. Spurgeon's health had improved, and she was able to share in the responsibility, and the devoted secretary, Joseph W. Harrald, knew the mind of his Chief. But other help was needed, and I was permitted, in a working agreement with them, to take the revision of the weekly sermon. Of this task I have already written in my book, *At the Sixtieth Milestone*. Many of these sermons were revised at the Manor House, Newton Harcourt, in Leicestershire, which had been placed at my disposal that summer, and there morning by morning, brought along the canal bank by a railway porter from Glenn Station, the telegram came giving the latest report of the invalid—a bundle of thirty lies before me as I write. But there came a glad day when the bulletins ceased, and then, on occasion, it was necessary for me to see the preacher to talk over future plans.

It was hoped that a visit to Mentone would complete the cure, which had been gradually welcomed from the beginning of August. So, on

October 26th, accompanied by his wife, who was happily able to undertake the journey, he set forth to the place which I believe he loved most in all the earth. There they had three months of "perfect earthly happiness." Mrs. Spurgeon was able to report that "not a care burdened him, not a grief weighed upon his heart, not a desire remained unfulfilled, not a wish unsatisfied." He was permitted to enjoy an earthly Eden before his translation to the Paradise above. From that spot, at five minutes past eleven at night on the last day of January, he went to God.

Now that all concerned in it are gone, there can be no harm in stating that a little while before the final summons came Harrald was in the passage of the Hotel Beau Rivage, where the end window looks toward the hills, and under a cloudless sky he declared that he saw, hovering over the Berceau, a company of angels. So convinced was he of it that he ran to call Mrs. Spurgeon, but when she came, there was nothing to be seen. His faith in his vision remained unshaken to the end. It is easy to say that he was tired and overstrained and excited. Perhaps it will be better to put his story beside the story of the angels at Mons, and there let it stand.

Of the subsequent days little need be said. They are chronicled in the volume I was allowed to edit, *From the Pulpit to the Palm Branch*. Each day was crowded with incident. At first there was talk of a grave at Mentone, then a hint of a tomb in Westminster Abbey, but the officers of the Church rightly decided that their Pastor must, in

death, lie amongst his own people. After the memorial service at Mentone, the body was borne lumberingly across France, was received by reverent hands at Victoria Station, London, brought to the Pastors' College, transferred to the Tabernacle, visited by fifty thousand people who walked in homage past the coffin, crowded services were held, and, after the vigil, the funeral passed through thronged roads to Norwood Cemetery. It was a procession of triumph. At Norwood a memorable eulogy and farewell was uttered by Archibald G. Brown, who will perhaps be chiefly remembered by his words that day. The only music was the lilt of a robin, who almost broke his red breast in the vehemence of his song as the people parted. Near-by the son now rests, and many others of God's saints have also been brought there for burial. One might say of Norwood Cemetery what Moody said of Greyfriars in Edinburgh when he read the names of so many of the holy dead, "I should like to be there on the resurrection morning."

For twelve days the attention of the civilized world was centred on Spurgeon's work and memory, and in death, as in life, he was able to bear a noble testimony to his faith. From the highest to the lowest, in cathedral and in cottage, his praise was spoken, and God was thanked for so rare a ministry. Nor should the outburst of affection shown in the prayer meetings at the early stage of the illness be forgotten: thousands gathered three times a day, there were mighty wrestlings, and some who prayed appeared as if they had "searched the Bible through and through, in order that they

might find promises that they might plead at the throne of Grace."

It was not to be supposed that such a man could pass without leaving behind him many problems. No ship can go forward without a hand on the wheel, and the question now became urgent—"Whose hand?" There were at least four who seemed to have some claim for consideration.

First amongst these was Dr. James A. Spurgeon, the brother who for so many years had stood as Co-Pastor by the great preacher's side. His past service, his knowledge of affairs, and his many qualities could not be disregarded. He was not a prophet, but only by the possession of great pastoral gifts could he have gathered and held together the great church at West Croydon Tabernacle. But it was evident that though the Church needed his service he could not take his brother's place; quite naturally he was looked to for guidance and support. He could not be overlooked, and accordingly at a church meeting on March 1st he was requested to serve the Church for a limited time as Acting Pastor.

At the same meeting the brilliant and volatile man who had occupied the pulpit for three months was asked to continue to act as Officiating Minister. He had come at a time of great need, and, throwing himself without stint into his task, he had drawn vast congregations, maintained the finances, and inspired hundreds of lives with new purposes and hopes. He was truly a man sent of God to that place at that time; of that there can be no doubt. The manner of his coming was curious. When

Spurgeon was recovering from his illness in August, he cast about in his mind as to who could occupy his pulpit during the coming months, and remembering Dr. Pierson, wrote to him inquiring whether he would be free to serve him. The very next morning after the letter was despatched, a letter arrived from Pierson expressing his willingness to come if he could help, and Spurgeon at once wrote again and invited him. If Pierson had only waited he would have had the invitation all the same, but his action was characteristic of the man in his impulsiveness and disregard of ordinary methods. It was not egotism, but the simplicity and eagerness of a child which led him to volunteer even though it meant measuring himself with the greatest preacher of the world, and it was these same qualities that were partly the cause of the after trouble. I can speak of it quite freely, for I came to know him well; he frequently visited Leicester in the after years, and more than once preached for me at Melbourne Hall, and was sometimes present when I was the preacher.

He was a great Bible student, a missionary enthusiast, a facile writer, a magnetic speaker. He was always making discoveries, and the quainter they were the more he liked them. When he thought of a striking thing he could not help saying it, and he was so largely the centre of his own world that he was rather surprised when he discovered he was not the centre of other people's. But, withal, he was most lovable, and when he gave himself to any one he gave himself completely.

Mr. Spurgeon, in inviting him to the Tabernacle, did not foresee the difficulty that afterwards arose, thought, indeed, that he had provided against it. In the last interview I had with him on the eve of his departure for Mentone, we talked of many things, and, finally, of the coming preacher. As he was being carried in his chair up-stairs I followed him to the hall, and the last words he said to me, looking back, were, "There is no danger of him being thought of as my successor, since he is a Presbyterian." A saying which opens several avenues into his mind at the moment.

In spite of his Presbyterianism, however, it seemed a very good working arrangement to have Spurgeon's brother as pastor and Pierson as preacher. But the Tabernacle church is a Baptist church, and we had not then begun even to think of a federation of the Free Churches. Indeed, if we had, it would have been a dubious expedient to have a minister of another order than that in which people had been trained. We tried the experiment when I left Melbourne Hall: a Wesleyan minister succeeded me, but in spite of the points of contact there are too many points of divergence to make such an arrangement easy.

When the early glamour had somewhat passed the question rose—What of Spurgeon's sons? Neither of them had given any sign or raised any question. Charles was near at hand, and if Thomas had been an ecclesiastic, or a place-seeker, or a Mr. Worldly Wiseman, he would have lost no time in coming to England, too. But he did not even offer his services, he just went on with his

work and waited, raising not a finger, and writing not a word to secure his recall. It was one of the great testing times of life, revealing character and trying faith. Only a disciplined heart could have answered the test successfully.

After a year's ministry Dr. Pierson found it necessary to return to America. Before he went he was invited to come back to the Tabernacle for another period, and it seemed fitting that in the interval Mr. Thomas Spurgeon should be called to occupy his father's pulpit. The thought of permanent occupancy seemed barred by the reports of his health, but the memory of his preaching in former years caused many to look forward to his coming with great expectancy. He was asked to preach for three months, and he accepted the invitation. Mr. Moody was fixed for a mission directly afterwards, and then Dr. Pierson was to take up the work again. All seemed satisfactorily arranged.

On Friday, June 10th, 1892, with his wife and child, Mr. Thomas Spurgeon arrived in London. On the following Sunday he was at the Tabernacle. *The Baptist* said, "It was pathetic to see him sitting by Dr. Pierson's side at the Sunday morning service, although he took no active part in it." The Sunday after he preached at "a service of singular impressiveness," from the felicitous text, "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you: and I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not yours but you: I will very gladly spend and be spent for you." Dr. Pierson sent back his good wishes in the message—"After eight days

His disciples were within and Thomas was with them." Such fanciful use of Scripture was common at the time, and Dr. Pierson was an adept in it; as witness the text with which he had begun his Tabernacle ministry a year previously, Peter's words to Cornelius, " Wherefore I came to you without gainsaying when I was sent for: I ask, therefore, with what intent ye have sent for me ? "

That year had done much for the people, but it was a very different type of ministry they had enjoyed. When the New Zealand son came, many of the congregation began again to detect the authentic Spurgeon note, and their hearts warmed to the younger preacher. The three months passed happily, health was fully maintained, and so greatly did the preacher win his way into the hearts of the people that many of them asked why he could not stay with them always. Towards the end of the term there was a great deal of suppressed excitement in the services, and when the final sermon was preached on October 9th, there was " one of the most remarkable and affecting scenes which ever occurred at the Metropolitan Tabernacle." At the end of the service, amid tears, the people called on the preacher to come back again, and thronged to shake his hand in affectionate farewell.

The enthusiasm of the people can be imagined by the fact that a special steamer, the *Empress Frederick*, was engaged to convey Mr. Spurgeon and three hundred or four hundred of his friends on October 14th from the Old Swan Pier, London Bridge, to Gravesend to join his ship. *The Daily*

Chronicle of October 15th, in describing the scene said: "Occasionally as the steamer went on, a hand would come out of some grimy warehouse window to wave a farewell. Then Mr. Spurgeon would take his hand from the pocket of his waterproof coat, and give his felt hat a hearty swing through the air. He rose to the whole affair admirably."

A farewell address was presented to him on board, he made a speech, those who had hymn-books insisted on getting his autograph in them, and then they sang that heart-breaking song, "God be with you till we meet again." Again, to quote—"The final break in the good-bye not unnaturally was the most pathetic, the most affecting part of all. But for the absence of the Salvationists' colour and the Salvationist music, it might have been the parting between General Booth and a vesselful of Salvationists. Amongst those who gave the final greeting were Charles Spurgeon, William Stott, W. J. Mayers, J. W. Harrald, and W. Higgs." The first person caught sight of on the ss. *Kaikoura* was Mrs. Thomas Spurgeon, holding aloft her little fifteen-months-old boy.

Several letters descriptive of the voyage have been preserved by Mr. William Higgs, to whom they were addressed. In the first Mr. Spurgeon says, "Now about that trip down the river. I confess that I have been a little troubled because I seemed to take so much for granted. Yet, believe me, I am far from being ungrateful. You have done me good at every turn and shown me kindness in every way.

What a mint of money I must have cost you! What can I say to you? I can only thank you again, and again and again, and wonder why you should love me so. Every turn of the screw lessens our nearness to you and increases your dearness to us. Try to keep our party patient. I must not be a bone of contention. When ALL say come, I must return, but not till then."

Nearing the Cape he writes in another letter, "You can guess that I often think of the past and of the future, too. What an experience I have had! Do you know I don't think I can ever return to the dear old Tabernacle; so I feel at present at all events. Friend Moody's invitation I cannot forget, yet I cannot bring myself to want to accept it."

In a letter from Dunedin dated January 23rd, 1893, he says: "It is probable that you will receive this just about the time of the annual church meeting. What can I say about it? I have told you already my feelings concerning any request to supply on probation. The only test that should be necessary is a test of health during the winter, and nothing but a twelve months' pastorate would afford a fair trial of that. I would not quit my work here, and sail so far again for less than that—at least that is how I feel at present. I hear much of Dr. Pierson's splendid preaching, and I am unfeignedly glad if real good is being accomplished."

For some days after the departure of Thomas Spurgeon the energies of the Church were directed into the mission conducted by Mr. Moody, and

after a few weeks its attention was devoted to the return of Dr. Pierson, who received a worthy welcome. He soon discovered that he had come back to a different Church. Without a pilot it had drifted. It was impossible, perhaps, for those inside the Church to estimate or to avoid the danger; equally impossible for those outside to warn or to guide it, lest they should have been suspected of interested motives. The disability attaching to a Church, even of the size and weight of the Church at the Tabernacle, standing outside its own denomination, was made evident; there was no official channel of influence, none had the right to proffer advice or service; so the drift continued, deflected or hastened for the moment by newspaper opinion.

When two candidates are before a Church the usual result is that both find it necessary to retire, and the Church that has been unwise enough to allow such a contingency, has to fall back on a third, probably less suitable than either of the two. The alternative is that the Church is divided into two parties, one saying, "I am of Paul," and the other "I am of Apollos." So it happened at the Tabernacle. The Church was not split, for it was impossible for any party to inaugurate a new assembly worthy of the Spurgeon tradition, but the rift in the ranks of the membership went deep, even to the severing of family relationships and the sundering of lifelong ties. The feeling was so strong that the retirement of either candidate would not have been a solution. If only the three Spurgeons could have been associated in the great enterprises

left as a heritage by the departed Pastor and President, it might have made the Tabernacle the Baptist cathedral of Britain. There were other possible arrangements if only the minds of the people had been normal, but any of them would have necessitated the most delicate adjustment and called for a single controlling mind. Alas! the great mind that had for so long controlled such diverse forces was missing, and for some months there was much unrest, freely spoken of as "The Tabernacle Tempest." Dr. Pierson still appealed to a large congregation, but laid himself open to criticism in the Church. *The British Weekly* was perhaps nearest the truth, when about this time it said: "Our own belief is that Dr. Pierson has not had justice done to him, that he has had bad advice, and that his desire has been to act throughout with a single mind."

On March 28th, 1893, the Church emerged like a ship that had been through a hurricane, battered and shorn, but still seaworthy. In a meeting of over two thousand members Mr. Thomas Spurgeon was called by a majority of three to one to occupy the pulpit for twelve months, this time with a view to the pastorate. Dr. James Spurgeon resigned, and Dr. Pierson's engagement terminated. From New Zealand Mr. Spurgeon at once cabled, "I cheerfully and gratefully accept the invitation," and then in the mode of the moment added a Scripture reference—"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God."

New heart was taken by the church membership,

and in reviewing the situation *The Freeman* finely said in its issue of April 7th: "If they miss the music of the march to which they all kept step in former years, they must resolve that its echoes shall not be allowed to die into silence."

Some surprise was expressed at Mr. Spurgeon's ready response, but it must be remembered that the whole situation had been before his mind for months, and as far as he was concerned there was no reason for delay, while for the sake of the Church a speedy answer was almost necessary. Perhaps his position is best set forth in a letter which he addressed to Mr. William Olney on April 19th:

"It seemed to me that in view of so substantial a majority, and specially in view of the earnest praying, that I could not decline to come, although there are some features of the case which make me shrink from the task.

"Looking at it from every standpoint I concluded that I ought to make the attempt, and if I find that on account of ill-health or for any other reason I cannot stay, I hope that no harm will come of it, either to the beloved Church or to myself. I had some hope that Uncle James would see differently and that we could work happily together. But it was not to be. Oh! how I hope that this whole business is of the Lord! May He prevent it from coming about after all, if it is not! Cease not to pray for me that I may be fitted to bear so high an honour, and to carry on so glorious a work."

Though no public mention was made of it till the time of probation was over, it may here be recorded, in Thomas Spurgeon's own words, that on the last Sunday of his previous visit, when Mr. Moody preached in the evening at the Tabernacle, "he had a talk with me in the vestry in which he said, 'You are yet to come back to this place, and I am going to pray God here and now that it may be so.' Now that it has come to pass," Mr. Spurgeon continued, "I do not need to keep it secret, as I felt when I had the call to come here it was the least I could do to go round Moody's way."

A further letter, written on April 18th, 1893, from Ashburton, New Zealand, to Mr. William Higgs, gives a vista into his heart at this time.

"My dear good Friend,

"I feel as if I could hardly write to you—my heart is so full. 'Tis done—the great transaction's done. The die is cast and the engagement made. O Lord! bless Thou this—from first to last! I could not say Nay; even though the experiment will not be thoroughly successful. If I only stay a year I may, by God's help, be able during those twelve months to bring about a more desirable state of things. God grant it!

"I am receiving congratulations on all sides, on account of this great honour which has come upon me; and no wonder. I stand amazed that I am counted worthy of such a call, and I cast myself at my dear Master's feet, a suppliant for fitness for the work. 'O use me, Lord, use even me!'

"Your loving friend,

"Tom Spurgeon."

Accordingly, in the *Alameda* he arrived in San Francisco on June 8th, exactly three weeks after setting sail from New Zealand. Some articles descriptive of his experiences appeared in *The Sword and Trowel* for the year 1893, but a more intimate narrative is available in several letters to his wife written on the journey. The first, dated "May 23rd, a day's sail from Samoa," gives a description of the ship and passengers. "As there is no second-class we have a good many second-rate people in the first cabin." Then he describes a number of music people. As they were journeying eastward an extra day was added; "we have more evenings than appears, for the Monday was repeated." The clergyman who conducted the first Sunday service asked Spurgeon to take the next. A sentence interesting to his biographer comes next, "There is one nice American, however; he is a Baptist, and was lately in the Metropolitan Tabernacle and heard Fullerton."

"I am not sure that I shall leave the boat at Samoa, for the captain, in a chatty lecture last evening, declared Apia to be 'the hottest place on earth,'" he says; but he did, for the first sentence in the letter of "May 29th over the line," is, "our run ashore at Apia brought us unalloyed delight." Even a prospective pastor of the Tabernacle may be allowed to change his mind. A school festival at which some six hundred men, women, and children were present, the children with beautiful eyes and copper-coloured skin, hugely delighted him. "I conducted last Sunday morning's service, and the captain, a real old believer,

ventured in. It was a good time, all things considered."

At Honolulu he stayed long enough to preach, and at San Francisco spent some pleasant hours, being " quite bewildered with its bustle." Delayed by an accident in the Sierra mountains, he was late in arriving at Salt Lake City. " I tried to remain incognito, but some fellow passengers split on me, and soon the Baptist ministry was on my trail." And that Sunday evening he preached. At Denver, which he reached by the Rio Grande Railway with its wonderful scenery, he visited a Sunday School Convention but hid his identity, and at Omaha made another pause.

At Chicago Moody was on the look-out for him, and he was able to speak to the crowds that thronged " The World's Fair." His host pressed him to stay for the Northfield Convention, and the Christian Endeavour Convention at Montreal, but, in view of the work that awaited him, he was wise enough to refuse. Niagara he reports as " beating all that there is at the Exhibition." On July 1st he reached Brooklyn and went to stay with the Rev. A. C. Dixon, " who invited me over some years ago —such a dear good fellow. He and his wife lavished kindness on me. I preached for him last Sunday morning to a teeming crowd; in the evening I went over to New York to preach for Dr. MacArthur, whose marvellously beautiful church was thronged to suffocation."

Of that visit Dr. Dixon, in his memorial sermon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle on October 28th, 1918, said: " When, about twenty-three years ago,

I heard that Thomas Spurgeon was in America, I hastened to invite him to preach in my Brooklyn pulpit and sojourn in our home. His acceptance of the invitation gave the pastor's family and the Church great pleasure, and when the hour for the Sunday morning service arrived, the house was crowded to its utmost capacity, and hundreds, if not thousands, were turned away disappointed. It was the reputation of C. H. Spurgeon which, for the most part, drew the people; but after the sermon, all felt that there would be in future no need of another's reputation to attract the people of Brooklyn to hear Thomas Spurgeon preach. His text was: 'I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?'—and I have rarely seen an audience more deeply moved. His humble, unassuming manner, his heart-earnestness, his clear unfolding of the text, his homely and happy illustrations, his musical voice, his utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and, above all, his exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ as pre-eminent in all realms, made us realize that we were listening to a truly great sermon by a truly great preacher. That July morning Thomas Spurgeon entered our hearts never to be expelled. We had esteemed him for his father's sake; we now admired and loved him for his own sake. The closer touch of our home associations for a week, which brought out the exceeding winsomeness of his character, increased our admiration and intensified our love. When he left, we felt that we were parting with a real friend, whose friendship it would ever be an honour and delight to cultivate. When, a few years afterwards,

my wife and I had the joy of spending a week in his London home, we felt that we were visiting old friends, whose hospitality had such a flavour of heartiness, kindliness, and delicate attention that we rejoiced to have our first taste of a real English home—the little Paradise of which we had heard so much, and were now permitted to enjoy."

He was still with the Dixons on the "glorious fourth," and toward the end of the week visited Boston and Plymouth, "to see the ground where first they trod—those pilgrims of whom you used to sing so sweetly." The next Sunday he preached at Martha's Vineyard, where at the close of the service an old lady rose and asked to say a few words. She asked the congregation to stand *en masse* to show their appreciation, and it did. On the Tuesday he lectured in Calvary Church, New York, and the next day set sail on the *Majestic* for Liverpool. "Every baby and child I see reminds me of mine, you queen of all the earth."

In a letter written during the Atlantic voyage, he says: "I am already exercised as to my first sermon at the Tabernacle. 'Thy way is in the sea,' asks to be preached from, but I cannot make it *go*: perhaps it will *come* ere it is really wanted." Then perhaps the veil of family life may be lifted far enough to allow the quotation of these sentences, "There is discipline in this separation. Learn its lessons and so *rejoice* in tribulation. As for our little ones, you are wise and loving and will train them for God. Oh! that the line of saints, aye, and of preachers too, may be maintained. You are already the mother of an angel; if God sees fit

to make your son an apostle won't it be glorious ? And why not ? "

On July 27th he arrived at Sussex Lodge, Clapham, the charming residence of Mr. and Mrs. William Higgs, who have always been his staunchest friends. Here he was destined to be entertained, much to his satisfaction, until December 11th.

His ministry at the Tabernacle began on July 30th, the Sunday after his arrival, when he preached, not on God's way in the sea, as he had purposed, but appropriately enough on Christ's call to the two brothers beside the Sea of Galilee. Preparation for this new chapter of Church history had been made during the previous month by a series of prayer meetings ; the Tabernacle itself had been newly painted ; and August was ushered in with hope.

CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST TABERNACLE YEARS

THE ministry which then began was destined to continue for fourteen years, but at first it was only to be a prolonged experiment. On the Monday morning Mr. Spurgeon had a cordial greeting from the press. *The Sun* contained an article on "Spurgeon, Junior," in which it was said "that the Metropolitan Tabernacle was packed from floor to ceiling." The prayer meeting on the Monday evening lacked nothing in enthusiasm. Mr. T. H. Olney took the chair at first, to welcome the preacher; when he vacated it the new leader was welcomed with applause and the waving of handkerchiefs. "I never prayed the Lord to bring me here," Mr. Spurgeon said, "I never found it in my heart to ask Him to put me in this place even for twelve months. I thought I did better by just putting myself in God's hands, saying, 'Send by whom Thou wilt send.' Therefore, when you sent for me I felt obliged to come."

The chief interest centred, of course, in his preaching. Perhaps an extract from *The Christian Weekly* may help our judgment. "Thomas Spurgeon has a command of good Saxon, which he knows how to use with effect. The cultured

simpleness of speech which conveys all the rich variety of feeling and phrase—the rhythm that gives a suggestion of poetry, the happy combination of phrases imparting a quality of radiance that gives oratorical glimpses of new meanings and ampler views—are within his reach. The common people will listen with ease, for he speaks their language. When last year he stood in the sacred place for the first time he unconsciously courted comparison with the prince of phrase-makers by approximation to his style. In voice and in a few familiar gestures he recalls the dead."

But lest we should get a one-sided view another verdict may be recalled. A writer in *The Freeman* a few weeks after said : " I knew of course that I was going to hear his son, Thomas Spurgeon. If I had not known this beforehand I should not have discovered it in the service. There are some small matters in the manner of the son, which with a little ingenuity you can trace back to the father, and yet how different ! In fact, I was pleased to find that there was not in the son one particle of mimicry of his father. Whatever Thomas Spurgeon may be he is himself—a distinct individuality —as his father was himself the most striking personality of his day. I observed in the son, it is true, the same fervid delight in the doctrines of grace, the same directness of address to God in prayer, the same textual treatment of the subject, the same mighty trust in God, the same clearness of enunciation in delivery that distinguished his father, and for all this I honour him."

The most picturesque description is, however,

to be found in the columns of *The Daily News* for October 3rd, 1892, and although the reference is to the preliminary visit the previous year, the informed and sympathetic impression it gives may correct and reconcile the two already quoted:

"Outsiders may be permitted to look on, and there can be no impropriety in our expressing the opinion that no impartial onlooker can fail to understand the desire that has arisen for another Spurgeon in the pulpit, as they sit and listen to the son of their late revered minister. The huge building yesterday, notwithstanding the wet, was quite full, and to the stranger taking his seat in the midst of the human mass piled two galleries high, before and behind, on the right hand and on the left, it looked to be very doubtful whether that rather young-looking man standing out prominently on the rostrum, which serves for a pulpit at the Tabernacle, could possibly hold the great concourse of people.

"Mr. Thomas Spurgeon is not quite so young as he looks: as a matter of fact he is thirty-seven years of age, and seen from the floor of the Tabernacle he looks to be about his father's height, though somewhat slighter in build. As the great volume of the rather crude unaccompanied music, in which the preacher seemed to be heartily joining, died down, and his voice rose clear and distinct in the reading of the Scriptures, it was quite easy to understand the fervour with which many of the congregation had caught up the suggestion that he should be their pastor. Seen from the midst of the congregation he is not very dissimilar in

appearance from his father. There is the frock coat, the little black tie, the quiet self-possessed demeanour, the clear, studied articulation; a voice, not quite that of Charles Spurgeon, not quite so strong and not quite so musical, so marvellously expressive and flexible, as his father's, but clear and pleasant and melodious, and with many of the late pastor's modulations and inflexions.

"When presently, after the manner of the great preacher, he breaks off from the chapter he is reading and begins to comment upon it, it immediately becomes apparent that he has the same ready fluency of speech, the same easy, familiar style of address, and when he announces his text and plunges into his sermon, he soon shows himself not altogether lacking in the racy way of putting things, the terse and vigorous English, and the strong sense of humour that were so characteristic of the Tabernacle pulpit for many a long year.

"Many of the gifts of his father—though no doubt in smaller measure—he certainly possesses, and every here and there one might have shut one's eyes and fancied that it was the old pastor back again. When it is added that in doctrinal matters the son appears very accurately to echo the father, and not only avowed his unfaltering adherence to the 'old ways,' but every now and again displayed touches of the characteristic narrowness—or what many persons regarded as narrowness—of the famous preacher before him, it must be apparent that the agitation for his appointment is not only intelligible, but the most natural thing in the world.

"Most decidedly Thomas Spurgeon is a chip of

the old block. It has been publicly stated that he himself would like to occupy the vacant post. Nothing seems more probable. He is living at present in the old house at Norwood, and he finds himself with a great and honoured name, with troops of friends, and an immense sphere of influence waiting to be filled. Whether he is the best man to fill it—having regard to his health and strength amongst other things—is a matter entirely for the Church to decide. He himself made no direct allusion to the question of appointment during yesterday morning's service, but he prayed with great earnestness that all their decisions might be arrived at in all charity and brotherhood, and the subdued 'Amens' that rose from every part of the great congregation displayed the depth of the existing feeling."

Though it was written almost ten years later the following letter from Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler will reinforce a sentence in the last extract. Writing from 176, Oxford Street, Brooklyn, on May 13th, 1903, he says :

"WELL-BELOVED BROTHER,

"I have just read with intense *delight* your fresh, sunny, and meaty address to the Pastors' College. When I had finished it I said to myself, 'This is not a chip of the old block—it is the *old block* itself.' Your blessed father *lives again* in every racy line, and in the spiritual unction of the address.

"Give my earnest love to your dear mother, and tell her that she can bear a great deal of sickness

as long as God is giving her *such a son* to carry on her husband's glorious work.

" My precious wife and I have lately celebrated our golden wedding with an inflow of congratulations and some generous gifts. May you and your dear Australian spouse live to stand on the same delectable mount on your road to the Celestial City !

" My health is not vigorous but I am often in various pulpits, and on the platform of religious societies, and the papers kindly say, ' with the same old force and fire.' (When these two Fs give out, then I want to be off Home.)"

Then with a paragraph about Mr. Sankey's illness, he ends : " Send me a few lines when you can, and always think of me as your devotedly loving American brother in Christ Jesus,"

" Theodore L. Cuyler."

" Thomas Spurgeon."

Some letters to his wife, written about this time, which I have been permitted to examine, throw side-lights on the events of these months. They are mostly written from Sussex Lodge, and, of course, are in a very intimate strain.

On August 3rd, 1873, just after his arrival, he reports : " I am in the richest and sweetest of clover. . . . I must just record the fact that we have had a most delightful trip across the Atlantic. . . . On Sunday, in Manchester, we went to hear Dr. Maclaren and enjoyed a wonderful treat. He was pleased to see me at the close of the service and spoke many words of cheer. . . . I was awfully

delighted at the success of my letter to Harold. I had thought that he would not care to hear it more than once or twice. You will be sick to death of it before the next reaches you.

" Now for some tidings of Tom himself. The day after my arrival (*i.e.* on Friday evening) I attended the week's special prayer-meeting. I came in as they were singing ' There is a fountain.' But they all stopped in the midst of a line, and shouted and cheered and clapped and waved. Then they sang ' Praise God.' The lecture hall was packed, and such earnest prayers ! I spoke at some length amidst the greatest possible enthusiasm, and after the meeting had at least seven hundred handshakes.

" On Sunday, feeling very much my position, I struggled through. There were huge congregations and great interest, but I was anxious and nervous and ill at ease. On Monday, though I had requested that there should be no demonstration, thousands came to the prayer meeting. I was greatly helped to speak. I kept them in roars of laughter, and yet maintained the solemn and devotional character of the meeting. Last night (Thursday) there must have been three thousand present, so we have truly made a good beginning. Praise ye the Lord ! As soon as the Sunday services were over I felt much relieved and better in every way."

On August 11th, he writes : " My second Sunday was much more pleasant (to myself) than the first. The crowds were almost as great, and I felt free and less constrained."

On September 1st: "We had a first-rate day last Sabbath. Dr. John Hall, of New York, was with us in the evening: he came down to the Communion service and spoke a bit.... I have paid two or three more visits to the sculptor and he has at last finished the clay model. I lay claim to a good deal of the credit for what success has been achieved. The sculptor never even saw dear father, and was quite prepared to accept my hints. He entirely altered the bust at my suggestion. On Thursday I was studying all morning; at four I was at the Tabernacle and saw no less than thirteen applicants, some of them resulting from the previous Sunday's sermons. Praise ye the Lord!—this is best of all."

On September 8th: "Last Sunday was quite a memorable day with us. Some adversaries have complained of the morning's sermon, but the Lord has owned it. In the evening Mr. Thomas Olney received me into the Church with words which could not have been more appropriate, and then I received thirty-nine others!"

On December 29th: "I have now quite settled down at Jubilee House, at the back of the Tabernacle, and my little den looks quite cheery and home-like. It is a grand institution, for I feel so much more like work in a workshop. My little stay at Westwood was very pleasant, and I think mother enjoyed it, too. My way is still hidden from me. I know not what to do. The officers, too, are puzzled as to how to proceed. The most of them are prepared to recommend the Church to invite me forthwith, but I'm not at all sure they're right.

"I sometimes think I must ask you to come to Old England, even if I do not remain at the Tabernacle, so dearly do I long to see you. Yet I must not do it until it is plain either that I tarry at the Tabernacle, or decide to work somewhere else in England. Really, I can't see that it is likely I can work again in New Zealand. May the Lord grant us a happy home of our own again in the place that He appoints!

"Meanwhile He will care for us, and even our trials—and you have had many—will not cause us to lose faith in Him, but rather to trust the more. I put you all again into His loving arms."

As the months passed the issue cleared. Those who desired Dr. Pierson to be the minister became less in number but more decided in tone. A correspondence was carried on in *The Daily Chronicle*, as to "Who shall succeed Mr. Spurgeon?" and the religious papers, especially *The Baptist*, discussed the matter freely. All this kept attention on the Tabernacle, where the congregations were wonderfully maintained, and Mr. Spurgeon grew in forcefulness of delivery and acquired a new ease of style. When the end of 1893 came, it was found that two hundred persons had been baptized, and that the contributions of the Tabernacle Church to the Pastors' College had been £1,600, only £400 less than the year before.

So marked was the success, that, instead of waiting for the expiry of the twelve months, a special meeting of the Church was called for March 21st, 1894, to consider the resolution, "That Mr. Thomas Spurgeon, having supplied the pulpit

with a view to the pastorate for eight months, be now elected pastor." Mr. William Higgs moved the resolution, declaring that the election of Thomas Spurgeon would fulfil his father's dearest wish, who had only mentioned the names of two men as likely to succeed him, and "Son Tom's" was the first. "When I die," he said, "of course the Church will send for Tom."

Mr. William Olney gave five reasons why he should be elected—that he preached Christ crucified, that his sermons were so largely illustrative and therefore appealed to the people, that already his ministry among them had the seal of God, that he worked harmoniously with his uncle; and so, with a Spurgeon at the head of the College and Orphanage, and a Spurgeon in the Tabernacle, it would be like old times back again, and that the various works connected with the Church were all prospering. There were nearly three thousand persons present, the counting of the votes occupied an hour, and then the report was made, amidst much enthusiasm, that 2,127 had voted for the resolution and 649 against it. The best comment on these figures was that of *The British Weekly*, "The minority is considerable, the majority is decisive."

Mr. Spurgeon was at St. Leonards at the time, and Dr. and Mrs. Alfred Hall, now of Toronto, who were then his host and hostess, recall the scene in their home when the telegram arrived giving the result. "Of the hallowed hour, late at night, when we passed to him the telegram from London conveying the news of his being chosen by the great Metropolitan Church as successor to his

illustrious father, we cannot trust ourselves to write. Nor dare we speak of the great prayer which followed. Our eyes were dim with tears when we arose from our knees; and it is one of the most sacred privileges of life to remember that our ears were permitted to hear those wonderful petitions which must have gone so direct to God's ear."

This, perhaps, is the best place to say that a very intimate and true friendship existed between the Halls and Spurgeon. A week before the decisive Church meeting, for instance, he wrote to them: "I thank God that you are willing to shelter me. I thank you, too. May He shelter me in His pavilion from the strife of tongues that is besetting me before and behind just now. It is terrible, and the mist grows thicker, yet 'when we halt no track discovering, etc.'" In a letter a week after there occurs the sentence, "I cannot say I feel triumphant over my acceptance"; and, as a sample of his love of metaphor, another letter to the Halls may be quoted, though it is perhaps out of place here. On February 21st, 1895, he writes: "To-day I have ventured out of my snug moorings in Blanket Bay, and am having a short cruise in Dining-Room Harbour; but I am not in racing trim yet, I can assure you. Cordage is slack, the ballast has shifted, and some of the sails seem rent."

Mr. Spurgeon accepted the call in a lengthy letter which was read to a large meeting of the Church on April 2nd. One sentence of it runs: "In humble and absolute dependence on Divine

aid, and counting on the earnest and affectionate co-operation of officers and members, and hoping for the prayers not of these only, but of Christians the world over, I do accept the position to which you have invited me, with its glorious privileges, its stupendous tasks, and its solemn responsibilities." Taking the chair as Pastor of the Church he closed his speech by reading a letter which he had had in his possession for years, written by his father in 1885, in which he said, "Get very strong, and when I am older and feebler be ready to take my place."

Ten days afterwards a public meeting was held in the Tabernacle, such as could only be matched at C. H. Spurgeon's Jubilee. Nearly two thousand persons sat down to tea, and at seven o'clock, when Mr. Thomas Olney took the chair, the vast building was crowded in every part. A few friends who wished to show their gratitude to God "for the election of their dear pastor," had subscribed £100, which was handed to Mr. Spurgeon to be used entirely as he pleased. He handed it at once to the treasurer of the Church "for those institutions that are in most necessitous case just now," and then made a speech which *The Christian Commonwealth* praised as a most able utterance, reporting it *in extenso*.

This settlement meant the retirement, instant or gradual, of a considerable number who had become involved in opposition to Mr. Spurgeon, some of whom could ill be spared; but the bulk of the membership were ready to welcome the old pastor's son as the new pastor, and so the second

phase of the Spurgeon era began. The public voice was given in *The Echo* of March 30th, 1894: "During the trying period through which he has just passed he held himself aloof from all partisanship, giving evidence of a modesty and self-restraint which must have made a favourable impression even on his opponents. His refraining from bringing his wife and child to England, lest it might seem that he had come to stay, is a case in point. Take him for all in all, 'Son Tom' is probably the nearest approach to the 'prince of preachers' to be found amongst the younger generation of Baptist ministers."

The same year witnessed another very interesting gathering. In the summer Mr. Spurgeon invited his people to meet him at the Stockwell Orphanage on July 14th. "You have welcomed me before," he said, "at least half of me. I want you to welcome the other half of me on Friday afternoon." Mrs. Spurgeon and the two children, who had been left behind in New Zealand, had made the journey to England in safety. In one of his sermons her husband tells how he waited impatiently at Plymouth when her boat was due, and with what joy he had welcomed her on her arrival.

At the Orphanage meeting Mr. Thomas Olney, who presided, told him that they were all proud of him, and with much satisfaction reported that not only were the congregations well maintained, but that there was "a feeling of unity in the Church that we could scarcely have hoped for a few months ago." Then, in the name of his friends, about five hundred of whom had contributed, he handed

Mr. Spurgeon a cheque for £350. At the Tabernacle welcome the pastor had given to the works of the Church the £100 then presented, but this time, in view of the establishment of a new home, he frankly said that he felt justified in keeping their gift for his own uses, which was quite the desire of those who had given it.

At the beginning of the next year a series of very interesting services were held at the Tabernacle, with the intent of reaching various sections of the people, and on the last evening, in wintry weather, some fifty meetings were held in the homes of the members; the average attendance seems to have been about a score—"not a bad record," says *The Sword and Trowel*, "for such a night." The church meeting the following year, 1896, seems to have been of a very delightful character, the area and the first gallery of the vast building being nearly filled. "It must have greatly encouraged and cheered the pastor," says *The Sword and Trowel*, "to be assured again and again in the most unmistakable manner that the heart of the Church at the Tabernacle beats as true to him as it did to his beloved father."

That such was abundantly the case can be gathered from a letter, addressed to the Halls, in which he "let himself go."

February 20th, 1896.

"My dear Friends,

"How I would like to be able to tell you all the details of last night's meeting. I was led in triumph all the time—*i.e.* gracing my Lord's

triumph and triumphing in His grace. We had hundreds more than were expected to tea, and as large a church meeting as (if not larger than) ever. I spoke boldly, as I ought to speak, re *loyalty*, etc., and was cheered to the echo. *The utmost enthusiasm prevailed!!* Every speaker made kindliest reference to myself, and my hands are doubtless greatly strengthened. It was a sight and time never to be forgotten.

" Mr. Higgs made a splendid speech, ostensibly about Thomas Olney, but in reality more about T. S. He said T. H. O. had seen C. H. S.'s enemies discomfited—their arrows missing the mark or falling blunted from his shield, or returning to the heart of the archers. ' I believe,' said he, ' that Mr. Olney will live to see history repeat itself in the case of Great-Heart's son—himself a great-heart, too.' Oh my! wasn't there a rumpus of delight!

" When it came to the proposal as to an assistant pastor all still went well. Never have I been so helped to speak. I became a fool in glorying. I insisted that I had toiled my utmost, that it was part of the bargain that I should have help; that I had hesitated till now as some had already proved that they would be content with none unless of their own choosing. I insisted also that the *selection* must be my own—the *election* theirs. When I told them that the deacons and elders and pastor combined to recommend Mr. Sawday (for a year), there was manifest approval.

" When I declared the proposal carried ' by an overwhelming majority ' there was another hulla-

baloo, and I had a private one *inside!* Didn't we sing 'Praise God,'—that's all. So we've got a new start, and my heart singeth for joy, and my eyes stream with tears of thankfulness.

"Pardon the length of this Hallelujah harangue. I'd hug you both if I could for very joy. I'm sure the agitation helped to this issue, and your letters played their part. Fare ye well."

"Yours,

"THOMAS SPURGEON."

So four years' pastorate happily passed. They were not without their trials, but joy was in the ascendant. Honour on honour was heaped on the minister of the Tabernacle. At the College Public Meeting on May 1st, 1896, Dr. James A. Spurgeon suddenly resigned the Presidency of the College, on the ground of loyalty to the Trust Deed, which stated that the college existed to train men for the Particular Baptist denomination, and should, therefore, be associated with that denomination. When Thomas Spurgeon rose there was long-continued cheering; it was known that he took an opposite view, but he simply said: "Dear friends, I should be sorry if this meeting assumed the form of a demonstration—and I regret to have to use the words—on either side. I am not going to reply to the remarks that have been made." And so," says *The Baptist*, "in one half-minute we had passed the quicksands." An admirable instance of tact. As a consequence of the withdrawal of his uncle, Thomas Spurgeon became president of the College, and shortly afterwards was elected president

of the Orphanage, and of the Colportage Society, too. He entered fully into his father's heritage, for (though it is anticipating) he also became editor of *The Sword and Trowel* in 1902. His sermons were reported week by week in *Word and Work* and in *The Christian Signal*; his services were sought for far and wide, his health seemed to be re-established, and everything bade fair for a prosperous future, when on the morning of April 20th, 1898, there suddenly came the great catastrophe—the Tabernacle was burnt to the ground.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CATASTROPHE

THE College burned the Tabernacle down. All sorts of rumours were in circulation at the beginning as to the cause of the fire; it was said that some fanatic had set the building alight because he thought that no voice but that of C. H. Spurgeon was worthy to be heard within its sacred walls; that the spirit of faction was so strong that it even led to arson, and so on. The simple explanation, however, was just a defective flue. The Pastors' College Conference was in session, and a dinner for some four hundred ministers was being prepared in the Tabernacle basement. The fire for cooking overheated a flue, which set some dry exposed wood alight, and the disaster occurred. The fire was caused by the cooking, the cooking by the Conference, and the Conference by the College. So we may say that if there had been no college there would have been no fire.

Superstitious people laid some stress on the fact that *Old Moore's Almanack* for the year predicted that, in the middle of April, "the destruction of a famous building by fire may be expected about this time. Insurance will cover the actual cost, but historical associations, alas!

have no money equivalent." Practical people were scandalized that when the fire was first discovered in the top gallery there was not even a fire bucket ready to quench an outbreak that at first could easily have been conquered by a few quarts of water. Sympathetic people mourned that the place consecrated by such a ministry of the Gospel should be doomed to sudden destruction, and wondered as to the future.

The fire was first discovered about half-past twelve on Wednesday morning, April 20th, 1898; in half an hour the roof fell in, and at a quarter-past two o'clock the Tabernacle was burnt out. The event was published to the whole world: all the newspapers and illustrated journals took notice of it, and pictures abounded of the havoc the fire had made. The best description of the scene appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* the next morning. Same of the paragraphs are reproduced:

"The first notification that something was wrong appears to have been given by some people occupying shops facing the Tabernacle, who remarked that smoke was issuing from a corner of the front portion of the roof. A few minutes later persons were seen leaving the premises in a state of great alarm, and in less than a quarter of an hour the vast edifice was blazing like tinder. The fire commenced in the gallery, attacked the roof, and then literally encircled the building until every portion, from top to basement, was a prey to the flames.

"A clergyman who witnessed the scene from a neighbouring roof states that within twenty

minutes of the first alarm the place was like a seething cauldron. All the windows had been broken, the flames were leaping forth in every direction, and above all was the fierce crackling of timber, the roar of a vast conflagration, fanned fiercer and fiercer by a gentle breeze.

" It would be impossible to exaggerate the scene of excitement in Newington Butts during the progress of the conflagration. The first measure adopted by the police was to stop all trams and to divert the omnibus traffic. Vehicles going from Blackfriars Bridge to the Elephant and Castle were unable to continue their journey beyond the Obelisk. In the neighbourhood of the Tabernacle many thousands of people soon assembled, and the spectacle which was presented to them, though painful, had many picturesque features. The breeze was sufficiently strong to stimulate the power of the flames, but not to dispel the great volumes of smoke which hung like a canopy at some distance above the doomed building. The gloom of the day only served to heighten the effect. In spite of tons of water which were hurled by the steamers upon the great temple, the hose being directed from all the neighbouring roofs and from every conceivable point of vantage, the fire burnt like a gigantic furnace. Columns of flame shot from every side, the great façade and Corinthian pillars, built of stone, were lapped and encircled by the fire, and then, at a time when it seemed impossible that the din could be more terrific or the conflagration fiercer, the majestic roof crashed to the ground. It fell with a terrible noise, like

the sound of big artillery, and immediately afterwards the flames burst with renewed vigour and showers of sparks ascended.

"Soon after the roof came down the firemen had the outbreak well in hand, and by two o'clock no danger was to be apprehended. Nothing remained of the Tabernacle—which was built at a cost of £31,362, and opened in May, 1861, free of debt—but the blackened walls. The façade stood forth as usual, except for the grime caused by the smoke and heat, but the interior of the building was simply a mass of charred woodwork. The great iron pillars which had supported the galleries were still to be seen, but the heat had played strange pranks with them. One was literally twisted into a spiral, and the shapes of all were grotesque. Every vestige of furniture was destroyed: the great iron safes containing many valuable papers were kept on the premises, and these, it is believed, will be safely recovered. The Communion plate, and various important records kept in the offices at the back of the Tabernacle, were happily removed without injury."

Not only the valuable Communion service, but the oil portraits of the previous pastors of the Church were fortunately saved. A marble bust of C. H. Spurgeon which adorned the vestry was also spared. The deacons tried to drag it away from the flames, but it proved too heavy, so they removed it from its pedestal, covered it with a carpet, and hoped for the best. It survived, stained so deeply that its original whiteness cannot be restored, and it stands to-day a memorial of the fiery ordeal

through which it has passed. It was this bust which called forth one of Mr. Spurgeon's caustic, yet humorous remarks, in the old days: when it was presented to him he thanked the donors but declared that he did not want to be busted.

Many other unexpected things escaped the ravages of the flames. I have a cancelled cheque, made out in my name for a month's allowance in my old mission days, which defied the scorching heat, long after the money it represented had melted away.

Almost as if by magic the deacons had printed announcements displayed that the Thursday meeting of the College would be held in Exeter Hall, and before three o'clock on Friday those bills had been removed, and others displayed giving notice that the Sunday services would also be held there. Other buildings had been offered, including Christ Church, which Mr. Meyer generously placed at Mr. Spurgeon's disposal, but it was felt that, if for nothing else than old associations' sake, the historic hall in the Strand was best suited for the purpose.

On the Sunday morning the congregation filled the building. Many were in tears as in his opening prayer Mr. Spurgeon quoted the verse: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The appropriate text was Isaiah lxiv. 11, 12: "Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt Thou refrain

Thyself for these things, O Lord? Wilt Thou hold Thy peace and afflict us very sore?"

During the sermon the preacher said, "We have lost a good many things as well as the structure. We are sorry that the table on the platform is no more, and that the Bible into which my dear father so often looked is now in blackened pieces. We are sorry that your hymn-books and Bibles, which you had stored in so many places, have ceased to be. It is a pity that we have lost the little child's chair in which my father used to sit as a boy, and where my own children were so pleased to seat themselves. But it is a comfort to know that the books, the accounts, the trust deeds, and some of the pictures have been saved. If we have lost our hymn-books we have not lost our songs; though our Bibles are burned the Word remains. Our pleasant things are those which nothing can destroy: the Church of God, the Holy Spirit, the fellowship of saints, the ordinances of the sanctuary. I am glad to tell you that the old copy of the Declaration of Faith which hung in the pastor's vestry has been saved, but even if it had been lost our faith would have remained."

A touch of the grotesque was given to the situation after the fire by the luncheon in the basement, which, though saturated with water, still remained on the tables: a large pan of potatoes was still on the stove; and bottles of aerated water were strewn about the floor.

When the fire began the College Conference was in session. A deacon's daughter brought the alarming news of it to the College Hall, and whis-

pered it to those near the door. Without making a fuss they ran over to the Tabernacle and discovered the serious nature of the situation. Mr. Nicholson, of Bedford, thereupon hurriedly walked up to the platform and told the news to Mr. Spurgeon. After a minute's pause he turned to those beside him, and said, " What shall we do ? Go on with the meeting ? " There was none to deny, so the address in progress by Rev. James Stephens, of Highgate, on " The Lord is with you while ye be with Him," was continued. But the people guessed something was the matter, so the president had to interrupt the speaker and announce, " I am told, friends, that the Tabernacle is on fire. We can do no good by rushing out. I dare say we should only be in the way of the firemen. Let us go on quietly with our meeting." Mr. Stephens resumed, but in about ten minutes the heat became so intense that, closing the meeting with prayer, the president asked the ladies in the gallery to go out first, and then the four hundred or five hundred ministers followed. By the time the last had departed it had become unpleasantly hot, but, happily, the College buildings were never in danger.

From the platform Mr. Spurgeon must have been able all along to see the tongues of flame shooting forth from the building in which he was more interested than any other man in the assembly ; yet he calmly maintained his place, and kept the meeting in hand. As in a flash it revealed his sense of values. To him the sacred exercises in which they were engaged were of more importance,

at that moment, than even the sight of the burning sanctuary. The story of the fire is interesting, but far more interesting to his biographer, at all events, is the unconscious manifestation of the soul of the man. Few would have taken the same course. I confess that I should have been eager, and I think rightly eager, to see the spectacle, but to Thomas Spurgeon, not only were the eternal things of first value, but the particular exercises in which he was engaged far outweighed any mere earthly consideration. In the light of the fire there stands revealed the man—there is the innermost secret of his life. Nothing to him was to be compared to the spiritual realities, he was so sure of Christ that nothing could shake his faith, nor obscure his sense of the divine, and all else was vanity.

Again and again Browning's conception of Lazarus, in his Epistle of Karshish, seems to fit his case and to express his character.

> "Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,
> Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven;
> The man is witless of the size, the sum,
> The value in proportion of all things,
> Or whether it be little or be much.
>
> . . . . .
>
> "Should his child sicken unto death—why, look
> For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness,
> Or pretermission of his daily craft!
> While a word, gesture, glance from that same child
> At play or in the school or hard asleep,
> Will startle him to an agony of fear,
> Exasperation, just as like.
>
> . . . . .

"Whence has the man the balm that brightens all?
This grown man eyes the world now like a child
That sets the undreamed-of rapture at his hand
And puts the cheap old joy in the scorned dust.

. . . . .

"And oft the man's soul springs into his face
As if he saw again and heard again
His Sage that bade him 'Rise.'

. . . . .

"This man is apathetic you deduce?
Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,
Able and weak, affects the very brutes
And birds—how say I? flowers of the field—
As a wise workman recognises tools
In a master's workshop, loving what they make,
Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb:
Only impatient, let him do his best,
At ignorance and carelessness and sin."

It is Christ's resurrection word that makes the saint, and of Thomas Spurgeon, saint and gospeller, it may be truly said as of Lazarus raised from the dead, "Because of him many went away and believed on Jesus."

CHAPTER XIV

THE NEW TABERNACLE

TWENTY and nine months was the Tabernacle in re-building. When it lay in ruins on that April evening it took an heroic spirit to contemplate its renewal. But Thomas Spurgeon and his helpers never hesitated. On that same evening he announced to the public that it would be rebuilt. It needed only the occasion to show of what fine stuff *he* was built. A man's own character can often be deduced from the sort of people he admires. Thomas Spurgeon's heroes, as he told me one day on the Alps, were Oliver Cromwell, Joan of Arc, Abraham Lincoln, C. H. Spurgeon, and—Paul Kruger! That last name will perhaps be read with surprise, but it is a singular thing that there is one portrait of Kruger and one portrait of Spurgeon that so closely resemble each other that one might, at a quick glance, easily be taken for the other; and, when you come to think of it, there were elements of similarity in their character.

The new Tabernacle, which cost £45,000, was opened, like the first Tabernacle, free of debt. A sum of £22,000 was received from the insurance companies, who behaved quite generously in the matter, and before "The Feast of the Dedication"

began—a long and happily sustained festival, from September 19th to October 18th, 1900—£23,300 had been contributed by the people. At no time during the progress of the work was there any lack of means to carry it forward: the Lord sent supplies as they were needed.

The fire had scarcely burnt itself out before messages of sympathy by letter and telegraph began to arrive. One friend wrote that if something startling had not happened the son would not have been in the Spurgeonic succession, and tried to comfort him with the thought that the fiery baptism proved his heritage. His faith, expressed in a meeting of the Church and congregation at Upton Chapel on Monday, May 9th, that whether £10,000 or £20,000 were needed he did not doubt but that it would come in God's good time, was a surer sign of his calling. Concerning an earlier gathering on April 21st, he wrote to his friend, Mr. William Higgs: "Last night's meeting was overwhelming—a tidal wave of sympathy and love."

Singularly enough the trust deed of the old Tabernacle had a clause dealing with the rebuilding of the Sanctuary, and in accordance with it, a meeting of the men members of the Church gathered on May 27th, 1898, to consider the matter. Woman had not yet gained her place, either in the world or in the Church. At that meeting, it was felt that while temporary accommodation for the church services would be found in Exeter Hall, the Pastors' College, and the Stockwell Orphanage, it would be in the best interests of the work to get back to

Newington Butts as soon as possible. Therefore, on expert advice it was decided that the entire basement of the Tabernacle should be cleared, and roofed in with what would be the fireproof floor of the new Tabernacle. In this way accommodation could be provided for two thousand persons. It was expected that this could be accomplished in three or four months ; as a matter of fact, the first services in the basement hall were held on the first day of January the following year, and the pastor then wrote, " We find that considerably over two thousand people can be accommodated, and *that they can all hear*." The estimated cost of this part of the work was £7,866.

So far good. But the rebuilding of the superstructure was a more serious business. There were those who questioned whether it should be rebuilt at all, whether the destruction of the old building, permitted by God, was not an indication that the people should go further afield, especially as the neighbourhood in Newington was so rapidly changing ; whether two or three places of worship might not be built instead of one ; whether a much smaller tabernacle might not suffice on the old site ; whether it was necessary to have two galleries in the new structure, and a host of other questions.

In the minute book of the Church a statement of the case was made in which occur the following paragraphs : " It seems to be taken for granted, from the first, that the Tabernacle would be rebuilt, and with God's help it shall be done." " We cherish no sort of doubt that the Lord will, in His own good time, reinstate us, and establish the

work of our hands." "No words can set forth our grief at losing a place endeared to us by ten thousand hallowed associations; but we are persuaded that He Who helped our late loved pastor, C. H. Spurgeon, to rear it, and then so successfully to occupy its pulpit, will enable us to rebuild the structure, and to continue the good work."

Finally, it was decided that the new building should be on the general plan of the old, omitting the top gallery if that was found to be desirable. Three conditions were imposed on the building committee: "That the restored building must worthily perpetuate the memory of the beloved founder, C. H. Spurgeon; that it should meet the requirements of the times and be suitable for conventions and anniversaries, as well as for the regular services of the Sabbath; that any scheme adopted should give effect to the pastor's suggestion that he and his hearers be brought into closer proximity to each other."

In the result, the committee determined to retain the top gallery, and when tenders were handed in from six builders the estimates ranged from £36,000 to £33,000. Mr. F. H. Ford, the secretary of the building committee, tells that having attended at the architect's office to see the tenders opened, he hurried to the Tabernacle to inform Mr. Spurgeon of the result. The estimates were greatly in excess of what had been anticipated, so the news was imparted gently, the sugar first, the pill to follow.

"You will be glad to hear that the tender of

Messrs. Higgs and Hill is the lowest, and that they will build the Tabernacle," to which the Pastor responded, " The Lord be praised." Then came the serious announcement of the contract price, and the pastor answered as promptly, " The Lord will provide."

The difficulties were not treated lightly, as the following letter to Mr. William Higgs, dated December 16th, 1898, will show :

" My dear, dear Friend,

" You should not have troubled to reply to my wire, which I fear only served to cast you down, though it was not intended to do so. Be of good cheer. All is well. We must make what reductions are possible and go ahead. Work and faith will do it. I half fear we must relinquish the Temple Street project, but the Tabernacle *must* be rebuilt, and God will help us. It is a bit of a staggerer, but we must face it confidently. We shall not appeal in vain, and I will work with might and main to ensure success.

" Yours, with ever-deepening love,

" Tom."

The faith of the Tabernacle people was greatly sustained by the sympathy of friends beyond the borders of the Church. *The British Weekly* at once started a fund for the rebuilding. " It will be a grand object lesson to our unity as Nonconformists and our mutual sympathy," it said, " if at this moment of crisis, and irrespective of denominations, we rally together to put the

fortunes of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Church beyond doubt, so far as human aid can do this. It is poor sympathy that evaporates and ends in the passing of resolutions and in the writing of letters. What is needed is money, money, given kindly and prayerfully." *The Echo* also opened a shilling fund, and *The Christian Herald* received contributions.

At a meeting on December 19th, 1898, it was reported that a sum of £16,000 was still required. At a reception by Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon at the Tabernacle, on February 8th, 1899, amidst the greatest enthusiasm, no less than £6,367 was contributed. When the sum of £5,000 was shown on the notice-board, the stream of givers stopped while the people sang the Doxology, but until nearly nine o'clock at night the queue continued, not as in these war days to get something, but in eagerness to give, and at the end they sang "All hail the power of Jesus' name," and went home, according to the report, in an "O be joyful" mood.

The progress of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Building Fund can be followed in *The Sword and Trowel* for 1898, 1899, and 1900. At the end of November, 1899, a sum of £5,000 was still required. By the following June this had been reduced to £3,500, and this had to be raised in less than four months, and it was nearly all contributed the following month.

A reception was held by Mrs. Thomas Spurgeon on July 4th, "the glorious fourth," as the Americans call it. This, for enthusiasm and gener-

ous and general giving, was almost a repetition of the reception by Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon the previous year. The morning post brought £671 ; early in the afternoon only £1,000 was needed to complete the contract price, and the people could not refrain from singing the Doxology. Before the gathering dispersed at nine o'clock £2,772 had been contributed, and only a sum of £346 more was needed.

Meanwhile, the ministry was exercised with many signs of God's blessing, and, as far as possible, the various organizations carried forward. Perhaps the most memorable days in the basement hall were those of a special mission in February, conducted by Archibald G. Brown and W. Y. Fullerton. It is reported in the April number of *The Sword and Trowel*, under the heading " The Lord's Doing," and truly His power was very evident. Mr. A. G. Brown was not able to be present till towards the end, being detained on the Continent, but he took charge of the last two days ; Mr. Spurgeon himself made up part of lack, and I was permitted to share. The students of the College were there in force, and one of the elders said, " During the time of my long connection with the Tabernacle I have never seen such enthusiasm—so many officers of the Church so persistent in their attendance, or the workers drawn from so many sources." Nobody was more thoroughly in it than Mr. Spurgeon himself, and as I was a guest in his house all the time, we were able to rejoice together.

The new sanctuary was fast rising. Its auditorium is thirteen feet less in length, and the vestries so much longer. The seats are further

apart, and are meant to accommodate 2,703 persons, as against the 3,600 sittings in the old Tabernacle that could be let. Of course the crowd in both buildings often exceeded the official sittings. During the progress of the work Mr. T. H. Olney, the treasurer, died, and his place was taken by Mr. J. E. Passmore. Mr. Spurgeon himself took the greatest interest in every detail, and was often to be seen on the ladders, and on the roof. But, above all others, Mr. William Higgs is to be praised; early and late he devoted personal attention to the structure, meeting with an accident one day which happily did not prove to be as serious as was at first feared, and not content with such service, he and Mrs. Higgs gave as a thankoffering the structural improvement of the roof and several other extra details of the building. There were others who made special contributions, amongst them the former scholars of the Stockwell Orphanage, who gave carpet and clock for the pastor's vestry, while the vestry chair was contributed by a missionary on the Congo who was a former student of the College.

A great feature at the opening services was the presence of Mr. Ira D. Sankey. On the morning of Wednesday, September 19th, a devotional service, largely attended, was conducted by Mr. A. G. Brown, when a telegram of greeting was read from Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon. The new Tabernacle was crowded in the afternoon, and Rev. John Thomas preached. In the evening, it is estimated, there were 4,000 persons in the Tabernacle, and 1,800 in the basement hall: Sir George Williams

presided. The following morning Rev. F. B. Meyer presided, and in the evening Rev. J. H. Jowett preached. The sermons of these two days, as well as Mr. Spurgeon's sermon the following Sunday morning, appeared in *The Christian World Pulpit* of September 26th.

Mr. and Mrs. Spurgeon held a reception in the afternoon of September 20th, it being the pastor's birthday, and some £600 were brought as a birthday offering. Mr. T. A. Denny presided on the Friday, and Reuben Saillens paid tribute to C. H. Spurgeon as "the greatest Englishman of the century," who was a devoted admirer of "John Calvin, the greatest Frenchman that ever lived." Mr. Sankey sang at several of these meetings, and on the Saturday evening, to a crowded Tabernacle, gave a service of song. Mr. Spurgeon preached both morning and evening on Sunday, and Mr. Tolfree Parr addressed a great crowd of children in the afternoon. Mr. John Marnham presided on the Monday evening, the workmen met the next night and had John Ploughman's Pictures, the various societies gathered on the Wednesday, when there were some presentations; John McNeill preached on the Thursday, with Lord Kinnaird presiding. Mr. Hugh Brown was the preacher the following Sunday; J. W. Ewing conducted the first baptism on the following Thursday; Rev. Dinsdale T. Young preached the Thursday after, and Dr. Alexander McLaren the next Thursday, when there was "a United Communion Service for Believers of all Denominations."

The generosity of the people may be gauged by

the fact that, at the end of a month's services, a collection of £100 was given at this last service for the Indian Famine Fund. Here I take some pride in mentioning that on the Sunday after the Tabernacle was burnt, collections were to be taken for the Baptist Missionary Society, and with a large-heartedness which goes a long way to explain the universal support accorded to the Tabernacle Church of these days, the collections were still taken at Exeter Hall for the Missionary Society, and realized about £80.

It was a notable achievement to carry through successfully such a vast undertaking, a tribute to faith that without adventitious aid all the money was so freely given, a signal providence that there was no serious accident during the erecting of the structure. The first gift towards the rebuilding came from a man in the street, who saw Mr. Spurgeon outside the ruins shortly after the fire and slipped five shillings into his hand, saying, "This is to build it up again, sir." That five shillings grew until, at the end of *The Sword and Trowel* for 1900, we find gifts acknowledged amounting to £25,000.

CHAPTER XV

THE SECOND SEVEN YEARS

In one respect Thomas Spurgeon the Twin resembled Jacob the Twin—he served two periods of seven years for his reward. In all else he was an Israel, having power with God and with man. His experience in London was very similar to his experience in Auckland—he built a tabernacle and, in a comparatively short time, found his health unequal to the task the Church involved, and was compelled at length to resign it. The great personal event in his Auckland ministry was his Marriage, in his London ministry his Jubilee.

That was on September 20th, 1906. At a reception in the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Spurgeon received from seven hundred guests over £1,000, which was, as customary with the birthday gifts, devoted to the various good works in connection with the Tabernacle. The evening meeting was enough to gladden any man's heart. His friend, Mr. William Higgs, presided, an oil painting of himself to adorn the walls of his vestry was presented to the pastor, and a grandfather's clock to adorn his own home. To Mrs. Spurgeon a silver tray, to Mr. Charles Spurgeon at Nottingham, where he then was minister, a hearty message of greeting. The speakers were F. B. Meyer, Dins-

dale Young, and Archibald Brown, and to the delight of the audience Campbell Morgan, just returned from America, came to give his good wishes.

This was the crest of the hill. It was from a time of rest at Deeside that the pastor came to the meeting, and, although the membership of the Church was still three thousand, changing circumstances aroused many questionings. It was on a Sunday during this interval that, in spite of his pain, Thomas Spurgeon wrote :—

Never mind the why and wherefore,
Never mind the how and when ;
For the thoughts of God are higher
Than the thoughts and ways of men.

Never mind the peradventures,
Never mind the ifs and buts ;
Jesus holds the key of David,
When He opens no man shuts.

Never mind the fear or favour,
Never mind the ayes and noes ;
He who sides with God and goodness
Far outnumbers all his foes.

Never mind the weights and measures,
Never mind the have and had ;
Christ can banquet starving thousands
From the wallet of a lad.

Never mind the whence and whither,
Never mind the thens and tills ;
Trust in God's unchanging mercy,
Rest upon His shalls and wills.

Of the man himself at this time there is no better sketch than that of his friend, F. A. Jackson, which appeared in *The Baptist*: "The hair is

iron grey, and the striking face is not without traces of time, and thought, and heavy responsibility, but the age of his heart is less than half the number of his years, for he is, at heart, a boy. Soft is the hand held out in greeting, gentle are the eyes that look into yours, and there is essential kindness in the tones of the voice. Meeting him casually you may be impressed by the exceeding gentleness of the man, along with a certain aloofness which is not coldness, and, mayhap, a suggestion of weariness born of impaired health and increasing burdens. But if you are fortunate enough to enjoy a closer acquaintance, and especially if it is your privilege to become his fellow-worker, you will discover an underlying strain of sternness and a flash of fire, which will go far to explain the personal force by which a thirteen years' pastorate at the Metropolitan Tabernacle has been maintained against enormous odds. 'Upon the top of the pillars was lily work.' Strength crowned with beauty. Massive workmanship and inspired grace."

An admirable appreciation appeared in *The British Monthly* of November, 1903, in which occurs this characterization: "Mr. Thomas Spurgeon's reputation as a preacher is growing steadily, year by year. Like his father he is an Anglo-Saxon in all his modes of thought and speech. His simple, straightforward language goes right to the heart of the people—there is no London minister who has a richer variety of striking illustration. His week-day addresses have the pleasant healthy flavour of John Ploughman's Talk. Mr. Spurgeon

is a Nonconformist by conviction, and has taken a prominent part in the passive resistance agitation: some of the most inspiring letters in the fight have come from his pen."

During the Baptist World's Congress in London in 1905, which he only attended on one occasion, when he was received with enthusiasm, and though asked to speak only led the assembly in prayer, the president of the South African Baptist Union contributed a very readable description of a service in the Tabernacle to the columns of *The Baptist*. It was a wet Sunday, and he says: "The congregation at the Tabernacle evoked the outspoken wonder of an American, who said that with such rain on a Sunday morning it was surprising to him that so many were there. To a casual visitor it was not the size but the intention of the gathering that seemed most striking. There was a great preponderance of men, which was a very suggestive item in itself. The singing was hearty and the listening was grand."

"One good soul said that the recent ingatherings at the Tabernacle had done the pastor much good, and the fresh vigour of these heartening days was manifest. After the Congress one cannot help comparing men and methods; and having listened to some of the foremost London preachers during the past few weeks, it would seem not too much to say that Mr. Thomas Spurgeon has the freest pulpit style in London to-day. With ease and dignity, undisfigured by excessive action, he deals with his theme in a manner that makes the hearer feel that it is of present and vital interest."

The London newspapers frequently made reference to Tabernacle affairs, and sometimes reported Mr. Spurgeon's sermons. *The Daily News* of November 5th, 1906, gave a lengthy *résumé* of a sermon on "Asking wisdom," and concluded with the following paragraph: "The sermon was brought to a close with a telling anecdote of Gordon's confidence in God.—'When Gordon was sent to the Soudan he confessed that no man ever undertook a harder task, but he said, "The task sits on me as lightly as a feather, for I have asked God for wisdom, and I know that He will give it to me."'"

General Gordon's experience was his also. In one of his sermons he opened his heart to his people: "Do you know that when I had got thus far with the preparation of my discourse last night, I sat me in my chair and said to myself, 'You are going to try to get these people to cast their cares on God, but you will not succeed unless you do so yourself.' Then I thought of the College, where we are just now expending more than our income, of the Orphanage, with its five hundred dear orphan children, of the fifty colporteurs, of the new Tabernacle, and of the great Church of many thousand members, which we can hardly minister to as we desire. I thought of many another care beside, and when I had put them in a great heap, I prayed for strength enough to lift it to the Lord, and I found it was too much for me. So I asked Him just to lift the load Himself and carry it away. I believe that He has done it, and will do it. I fancy He has lifted me as well."

Another sermon extract may be given as an example of the direct blessing resting on the ministry at this time. "A few Lord's days back I ventured, in yonder pulpit, to urge some of my hearers to begin to run in the way of God's commandments, and I went a little out of my ordinary track by using such an illustration as this: 'We are starting a race this morning; come all of you who have it in your hearts to begin to run towards God. Listen to me now. Stand ready for the signal.' I cannot exactly remember the words I used, but I have good reason to rejoice that I did use the metaphor, for God blessed it to the salvation of some souls. I told them of the prize that was set before them. I pointed to the cloud of witnesses that held them in full survey. I bade them, for their own sakes, and for their loved ones' sakes, to begin to live for God, and then at last I cried 'Are you ready?' 'Are you ready?' And presently, so to speak, the flag fell, and I exclaimed 'Go! In the name of the Lord, go!' Only a few days later, one dear friend wrote to me, and said, 'I could not stand the falling of that flag, and the saying "In the name of the Lord, go!" Pray for me, for I have begun to run in the way of God's commandments.'"

Such blessing was not singular. Another bears witness to the preacher in this striking sentence, "when you closed with the Benediction I closed with Christ."

The Morning Leader of August 10th, 1903, in its series "The Man in the Pulpit," had an admirable and sympathetic sketch of the Tabernacle

pastor. "Simple is the preacher, simple the prayer, simple the sermon. The Puritan spirit is strong in him. He prays that simple worship may take the place of what art suggests and science admires. He prays for the unaged Gospel and the unembellished Cross. He prays for deliverance from priestcraft and unfair legislation. Let the saints of God be dowered with the gentle spirit of Jesus, combined with adamantine firmness."

An interesting incident occurred on Sunday, April 13th, 1907, when his son and daughter were baptized. Mr. Hugh D. Brown, of Dublin, was the preacher, but before the baptism Thomas Spurgeon rose and said: "I need not tell you that this occasion is one of deepest joy to me. You can understand that this scene and this action remind me of my own baptism with my dear brother in this place at my dear father's hands. For that act of obedience and consecration I have reason to thank God from that day until now, and my prayer is to-night, as my own dear children, and the children of other friends of ours, obey their Lord in baptism, that they may have a similar joy, and that their example may have a similar happy effect, and that for the rest of their days they may know the keeping power of Christ."

During these years there were four missions at the Tabernacle. First the Simultaneous Mission at the end of January, 1902, when Gipsy Smith, John McNeill, and Hugh Price Hughes were the missioners, and great crowds assembled. Last a mission conducted by myself, to which two articles are devoted in the 1906 *Sword and Trowel*, and one

by Mr. W. R. Lane, of whom Mr. Spurgeon had the highest opinion. But the outstanding mission was that which sprang up after the Welsh Revival, and was carried forward by six Welsh brethren then in training in the Pastors' College, one of them now a missionary on the Congo, and the others in pastorates at home: D. C. Davies; A. Ll. Edwards; J. R. Edwards; T. Hayward; Caradoc Jones; F. Williams. The meetings began on March 13th, 1905, and continued until the middle of April. Three articles in *The Sword and Trowel* for 1905 describe it, and Dr. McCaig feels that he is justified in calling it a Revival. Over seven hundred names were registered of those who confessed Christ. The great features of these meetings were the midnight marches to gather in the people, in which Mr. and Mrs. Spurgeon shared. He was heart and soul in the work. Writing to Mr. Jackson on March 25th, he says: "At eleven we formed up in the space between Tabernacle and railings, and marched forth about 11.30. We were four deep, I know not how long. Mrs. S., Dr. McCaig and his wife, marched with me just behind the musicians. We sang and shouted out the news of the meeting all the way. What a sight when we got back to the Tabernacle steps—drunkards, harlots, all sorts of refuse, many in drink, but all singing 'There is a fountain filled with blood.' The meeting lasted till three o'clock! Solemn, subduing, wonderful. The end was striking. Just as one brother announced the Doxology, I felt impelled to step forward and repeat, 'He hath made Him to be sin for us,' etc. Then the

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brother said, 'Let us all repeat it after Mr. Spurgeon,' and they did. This was no sooner done than another started 'Hallelujah! What a Saviour!' and oh, the power and grace as we sang that hymn *through*. Then the Doxology and Benediction, but there had been doxology and benediction all the time. Twenty were gathered in! Rejoice with me, and with God. 'Who is a pardoning God like Thee.'"

Again on March 30th he says: "Both meetings last night were glorious. I saw twelve applicants for membership, and yet was in time to have an hour and a half of the fresh meeting. There must have been five hundred in the procession. We shouted ourselves hoarse, and tramped ourselves *hors de combat*. The Lord has not removed our candlestick. How good of Him! They say I look haggard, but I would rather look haggard than be a laggard!"

One of the great sorrows of this time was the death of his dear mother, on October 22nd, 1903. From the glimpses into the early correspondence between mother and son it will have been seen how dear they were to each other. "On Saturday, October 17th," he writes, "I received a parting benediction from her dear lips, that will echo in my grateful heart till I also hear the Master's call. It was Christiana's farewell blessing to her children:—'The blessing—the double blessing of your father's God be upon you, and upon your brother,'" she said with fervour; and a little later, 'Good-bye, dear Tom, the Lord bless you for ever and ever. Amen.'

MR. AND MRS. THOMAS SPURGEON: A JUBILEE PHOTOGRAPH.

"On the previous day she had said to her faithful friend and companion, Miss Thorne, who had been with her for forty years, 'Whom shall I see next?' 'Whom would you like to see, darling?' was the response. Then with a face all aflame with joy of blest anticipation the exile, so soon to be brought home, exclaimed, 'MY HUSBAND!' But when the last moment came a fairer vision was granted to her; she exclaimed, 'Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! I can see the King in His glory!'"

Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon was a truly remarkable woman. From the year 1868 she was a great sufferer, but she had learnt to rejoice in tribulation. In the home she was a veritable queen, and she delighted in the Gospel as preached by her husband; to her he was king, or as she playfully called him, "The Tirshatha." I remember holding a Sunday evening service with Manton Smith, in the library of "Westwood," when she presided at the organ, having called in her neighbours to hear the word of the Lord. Her great work was the distribution of books by means of "the Book Fund"—no less than 199,315 volumes having been sent to preachers by this means. The story has been chronicled in two books, *Ten Years of my Life in the Service of the Book Fund*, and *Ten Years After*.

Of the next day, Tuesday, October 28th, her son writes, "To-day has proved the most trying experience of my life, but I have been helped." Immediately on the death of his mother, it proved necessary for his wife to have an operation, so there was the double anxiety. Happily Mrs. Thomas

made a good recovery, and in two months' time was able to get about again.

Two other members of the family had already passed over : his grandfather, Rev. John Spurgeon, who died on June 14th, 1902, aged ninety-two years, and his uncle, Dr. James A. Spurgeon, who died on March 22nd, 1899, in a railway carriage, as he was on a journey to London.

On February 13th, 1907, owing to continued ill-health, a letter of resignation was written to the Church : " Only a strong sense of duty, I can assure you, induces me to take this step." The deacons replied suggesting a long rest, to which he reluctantly agreed. The London papers, with one consent, made very sympathetic reference to the event. But as it was necessary for the work to continue, a very hearty invitation was sent to Rev. Archibald G. Brown to become co-pastor. On May 4th he accepted the offer, and was duly installed at a great meeting on June 17th.

Meanwhile, after a sojourn at Woodhall Spa, Mr. Spurgeon had been able to address the College Conference, and almost immediately he left for Carlsbad, in company with Mr. J. Hill. From thence he journeyed to Meran ; from whence, on February 8th, 1908, he sent his final resignation to the Church, which they had no option but to accept. On March 11th, Mr. A. G. Brown was invited as his successor, and for three years he exercised a very fruitful and fragrant ministry at the Tabernacle as Pastor of the Church. A competent judge of the preachers of the day has said that Archibald G. Brown was the greatest unac-

knowledged orator of his time. Happily, he still lives and preaches. He, in turn, was succeeded at the Tabernacle by Dr. A. C. Dixon, of America.

The farewell meeting was on Monday, June 22nd. The love of the people overflowed in gifts, a cheque of £450 to Mr. Spurgeon, and a dressing-case and pearl necklace to Mrs. Spurgeon. It was recorded that during his ministry 2,200 persons had been received into the fellowship of the Church, but that is not the full measure of the ministry of these brave fourteen years, so filled with opportunity and difficulty, joy and pain, decreasing membership and increasing weakness.

Once he wrote—it was on July 26th, 1902—to his old comrade, Rev. J. S. Harrison: "There have been many and sore trials, and I have been depressed beyond measure. Truth to tell, I am at this present time not altogether jubilant. The difficulties are enormous and they seem to increase. Many of the people are loyal and faithful in a high degree, but I have had many bitter disappointments in this respect. My one dread is of remaining in a post of honour longer than I should. I cannot doubt that God led me hither, but I sometimes wonder if He bids me stay. I am opening up my heart to you, for you are a true friend of mine."

Yet three years later he was able to write and sing:

In burning fiery furnace, the glowing coals I tread.
The flames, though seven times heated, hurt neither feet nor head:
They burn the bands that bind me, they have no power to kill,
They cannot even scorch me, for God is with me still.

My soul's among the lions, the den is dark and deep,
And yet I rest securely, He gives His loved one sleep :
The lions cannot hurt me, they learn to do my will,
My God has sent his angel, and He is with me still.

The tempest howls around me, nor sun nor stars appear,
My comrades lose their courage, my craft is stripped of gear ;
Yet I am calm and thankful, I have no thought of ill,
An angel stood beside me, and God is with me still.

E'en though I walk the valley, where death's dark shadows fall,
Yet will I fear no evil, no terrors can appal ;
The rod and staff of Jesus my soul with comfort fill,
I cannot but be happy, for God is with me still.

Of course Mr. Spurgeon often spoke in the Tabernacle after he resigned the charge of the Church, but with less frequency as the years went on, until by and by he was quite silent. There is, however, a permanent record of his voice, for on August 2nd, 1905, he spoke into an Edison-Bell phonograph, first giving his father's last words in the Tabernacle, and then making a record of his own, entitled "A Parable of the Phonograph." It runs as follows :—

"The apostle Paul called the Corinthian Christians the epistle of Christ. Were he describing believers to-day, he would probably employ an up-to-date comparison, and say, 'Ye are Christ's phonographs, Christ's voice-recorders, Christ's talking machines.'

"It is the privilege of true Christians to receive and to record Divine impressions, to register the voice of the Spirit, and then to reproduce the heavenly message. That which has been spoken to them they utter ; what God has wrought

within them, they in their lives work out. They should sound forth faithful echoes of the word of Christ which abideth in them. The veriest whisper should be recorded by the sensitive soul, and the tenderest tones repeated by a consistent life.

"This thought it is that finds expression in the lines we love to sing, 'Lord, speak to me that I may speak in living echoes of Thy tone.' At best we are imperfect instruments, but the Master is ever at work upon us, and we shall be absolutely accurate transcripts of Him by and by. We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is."

CHAPTER XVI

THE COLLEGE CONFERENCE

For fifty-four years the past students of the Pastors' College have assembled in annual conference in the Spring, either in the week before or the week after the meetings of the Baptist Union, the date being regulated by the recurrence of Easter. These Conferences generally continued from the Monday afternoon to the Friday afternoon, and were entirely *sui generis*. C. H. Spurgeon breathed his own spirit into them from the first, and a fine feeling of brotherhood exists between the members. Many a time they have been thrilled as with linked hands they have sung, after the final Communion service, the College psalm :—

> "Pray that Jerusalem may have
> Peace and felicity,
> Let them that love thee and thy truth
> Have still prosperity."

Many a time enthusiasm has risen to boiling point as the assembled ministers have sung together the College anthem :—

> "The Cross it standeth fast.
> Hallelujah!"

Many a time, too, they have been melted to tears as they have bent before the Throne of grace, or recalled the history of some departed brother, or listened to some of their number setting forth the things of Christ. Not always tears, however; cheers have not been infrequent, and laughter has often rung round the Conference Hall of the College.

But nothing has ever evoked more interest than the President's annual address, and Thomas Spurgeon gave twenty-one of these, Dr. James Spurgeon three, and C. H. Spurgeon twenty-seven. During the earlier years the President also preached on the last day of the Conference: on several occasions Thomas Spurgeon has also rendered this service; on the year that his father died the task fell to me, the next year to Dr. Pierson, the following year to Thomas Spurgeon; but of late years a vice-president has been annually elected who took this as part of his office. In succession to his uncle, who was elected twice to the position, Thomas Spurgeon was elected President in 1894, and was elected every year after. Even in the last two years, when failing health made it impossible for him to perform the duties of the post, he was still voted into the chair, Charles, who for years supported his younger brother, being annually chosen as deputy president all along, loyally making up his lack of service.

In passing it may be noted that there was a humorous rivalry as to which of the brothers was the elder man. Charles was born first, but Thomas always insisted that, as he was in Australia on the

day of their majority, he came of age earlier than his brother—a contention that must be conceded. But as against that, it may be remarked that, as in his final voyage to England Thomas came by the Pacific route and added a day to his year as he crossed longitude 180°, he fell a whole day behind his brother, and consequently Charles was his senior by over eleven hours! But a truce to such nonsense.

The relation between the brothers and the Conference may be judged by the following letter of greeting, which is but a sample of many. It is dated December 28th, 1897.

"DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

"Again we greet you. 'A Happy New Year to you.' How fares it with you and with your work? Does the fire burn brightly on the altar? Does the dew fall copiously on the field? Is the old flag still waving, and the same war-cry sounding? And how goes the fight? Can you let us have answers to these inquiries, short, pointed replies, as soon as possible? We should also like to know how *you* are, and what you look like now. Send us a photo if you can. As for us, we are toiling on, and leaning hard, and looking up.

"Yours very heartily,

"THOMAS SPURGEON, *President.*

"CHARLES SPURGEON, *Vice-President.*"

With pardonable self-deception it was declared year by year that the last presidential address was the best: even cautious brethren, carried away in

the common elevation of feeling, admitted there never was a better. In a sense this was all true: the address just delivered was actually the best at the moment, for it was vivid while the others were but dim memories. The repetition of such a verdict year after year might have amused the cynic, but it was evidence of the deep hold the President had on the six hundred or more men, and of the affection with which they regarded him. The last love-letter is always the best; and the man who is in love is always eloquent.

Thomas Spurgeon rightly looked upon these addresses as the chief utterance of the year. He did not, however, deal with current topics; indeed, sometimes his subjects were quite remote from the sentiment of the time, and perhaps gained by the contrast. He often used similitudes, was ever fond of a parable, broke into poesy at times, and, especially towards the end, laid his head on the bosom of nature. On several occasions his address was but a glorified sermon—none the worse for that; nearly always it was illustrated copiously from his own experience, and more than once entered into the holy of holies of the speaker's soul. Any man might be proud to have produced twenty-one such addresses, and the brief greeting of the twenty-second year, when further address was impossible, was a fitting crown for the whole. The last two years the Conference has been so abbreviated that there has been no address—there is, in fact, now no president.

It need scarcely be wondered at that such a seafarer should have chosen for his first address in

1895 the subject "En Voyage." It was felt to be the key-note of his own ministry when he said: "I find that in a comparatively ordinary letter that Whitefield wrote to a friend he says in the closing lines—'Free grace for ever.' Brethren, put that, not at the end of your ministry, but throughout it, with a large mark of exclamation—two if you like—'Free grace for ever!' 'Free grace for ever!!'"

The nautical metaphor was carried well through. He instances the Doldrums, the Sargasso Sea, and the ice-fields, as the hindrances to the Church, and the high tone of the deliverance may be judged by one of the closing paragraphs. "Have you ever heard of 'the brave West winds.' I blessed God when they began to blow. There was no more battling against head winds, no more of that close-hauled sailing which meant sea-sickness to most passengers. The brave West winds! They came behind with mighty force, and away we sped for thousands of miles, with fair winds and flowing sheets. Oh! it was glorious sailing, that! Fine weather all the time; a strong wind, with huge green seas careering round us—the hugest waves the world over, thirty or forty feet in height. The waves in the Channel are bad enough, but they are only eight or ten feet high; but with stately march these big waves chased each other, and helped us on toward the sunny South. You know of Whom I speak, and of what mighty power I tell. We have got now to where we came this time last year, when we spake of the power of the Holy Ghost. He is the brave West Wind. I dare to speak of

Him under such an emblem, for Jesus did the same. Not that He is mere breath, but because the best thing earth or sky affords, with which to compare Him, is this same mysterious but well-nigh omnipotent wind. Said a thoughtful passenger to me on my first voyage across the Southern ocean, 'What a pity it is,'—for the wind was blowing fair and fresh—'What a pity it is that we cannot use it all.' They were taking in sail, and the fresher it blew the more they had to furl. Soon we were speeding along under little more than bare poles. I liked the thought—'What a pity it is that we cannot use it all!' Suppose a ship should be constructed on which sails could be piled the more the breezes blew, what a pace she would go at! And oh! if you and I would only trust the Holy Spirit more, and use Him to the full, we should be sluggards and laggards no longer! Then would we show our heels, and speed away towards heaven, successfully serving Christ the journey through."

The subject for 1896 was "Antidotes," suggested by the saying of an old woman, who stayed at home on Sundays and read Spurgeon's sermons, instead of attending her chapel, saying of the preacher, "It was antidotes, antidotes, antidotes, from beginning to end, nothing but antidotes." This is one of the sermonic addresses, and it is very successfully built up on the report of His mission which our Lord sent to the imprisoned John Baptist. His estimate of much of the modern music is evidenced by the quotation:

"I cannot sing the old songs," they heard the maiden say,
And then the guests with one accord rose up and said "Hooray."

Back again next year to allegory, he spoke in 1897 on "The Heaven-ward Railway," a subject which, in less masterly hands, might have become trivial. "The membership of my Church," said one, "is three hundred and some odd." "Oh," said another, "I have only a hundred, *all odd*." That is to illustrate the thought that ministers as guards of the train will have some strange passengers to deal with. A memorable passage was, "On a voyage to the Antipodes, it was my lot to sit next to the chief engineer at meal-times. He was a genial fellow, and a good conversationalist; but every now and then he was as those that dream. He had missed the last sentence altogether and had to beg pardon for apparent inattention. 'I was listening to my ponies,' he would add, by way of explanation. He called the engines his ponies, and more than once I have known him quit the feast because they didn't trot quite evenly." The lesson, of course, is obvious, as is also the suggestion of the incident that came soon after about Napoleon: "Are you ever afraid, Citizen Consul?" said one of his councillors to him after the explosion of a royalist infernal machine. He answered, "I afraid—oh! if I were afraid, it would be a bad day for France!"—a story well suited to these days of terror in which we live.

In 1898 the topic was "A Letter from Home," suggested by the replies which were given to the New Year's letter quoted earlier in this chapter. The fire at the Tabernacle occurred the next day, and those on the look-out for coincidences remem-

bered the references to "No strange fire" in the address the day before. Fire, the dew, the flag, and the fight, occupied the first half of the discourse. Professor Blackie once said, "I want three things: first, a great cause; second, a great battle; third, a great victory." The second part of the address was allotted to the three phrases, "toiling on"; "leaning hard"; "looking up."

On the last idea, this—"One soon becomes accustomed at sea to hearing commands sounded forth in stentorian tones from the quarter-deck; but I was not a little startled, one fine day, when the good ship was rolling heavily, to hear the first mate shout at his loudest, 'Look up!' Anxiety was mingled with authority in his tone. And no wonder. Yonder raw apprentice was clambering up the rigging, but his eye was on the deck. I think I hear the warning message now, 'Look up!' The officer seemed almost angry. The lad had doubtless been warned, but he was disobeying. I know the thought that was in the old salt's heart. 'The young idiot, to trifle thus—didn't I tell him of his danger? He deserves to fall, but I must try to save him.—LOOK UP!' He was just in time; another instant, and there would have resounded through the ship that awful thud which tells of a fall from aloft, and of the spilling of a soul. 'Twas well that the first officer of that craft had a tender heart, a quick eye, and a trumpet tongue. Our God has all these—He has saved us from falling many a time!"

Mr. Spurgeon's summons to the 1899 Conference said: "How will the Lord visit us this time, I

wonder. Perchance our experience will resemble Elijah's, 'After the fire a still small voice.'" The President again dealt in similitudes. This year "Lessons from Lighthouses." Quoting Michelet, "From base to summit every stone biting thus into its neighbour, the lighthouse is but one sole block, more one than the very rock it stands on. The billows know not where to assail it : they smite, they rage, they glide," he said. "Oh, it is wonderful what strength they have who trust in God. They can defy all blasts and billows. A stranger from the provinces once came to the Tabernacle, and heard 'the voice that is still' say, as she opened the door, 'A simple-hearted child of God can floor a dozen devils.' She has never forgotten it. Many a time that sentence has helped her. May it help you, dear friend, though I only echo it, 'a simple-hearted child of God can floor a dozen devils.'

"In the United States, the following rigorous order is in force : 'The inspector's visit may occur at any time, and in welcoming him the head keeper presents him with a white linen napkin.' As he goes his rounds, he passes this over the lens, the lamp, and even inside the kitchen utensils ; if the cloth comes out immaculate from the test, he enters in the lighthouse log-book this record : 'Service napkin not soiled,' while the slightest smirch on the linen means a black mark for the keeper ! Who of us could stand such a test in spiritual things ?

"Henry Ward Beecher once ridiculed the idea of a glow-worm offering itself to the Government

as a lighthouse, and imagined it saying when it was refused—' Then I won't be anything.' ' Is it not worth while,' he inquired, ' for a glow-worm to be a glow-worm ! '

" Let us take our bearings, and prepare for arrival. That Christian nobleman, the Master of Blantyre, who navigated his own steam-yacht till his health failed, said, as he passed away, ' Full steam ahead ! ' There was much meaning in the unusual death-cry. He knew his whereabouts. He saw the light. It was all plain sailing when he came to die. What bliss will flood our souls when the end of the journey we see ! Not more glad was the Ancient Mariner to behold his native land than we shall be to hail the glory-shore. His song will find an echo in our hearts :—

" Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

" We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God ;
Or let me sleep alway."

" *We* shall be both sleeping and awake : ' I sleep, but my heart waketh.'

" When I last steamed towards the English Channel, a thick fog hindered my progress. For two or three days it kept us back. Still, we ' felt ' our way homewards. At length, we knew that we must be nearing land. Presently we found ourselves among a little fleet of trawlers. Passing

dead slow round the stern of one of these, we looked down from the towering deck upon this mere cockleshell, for so she appeared. Our captain was at the edge of his bridge, and made as if he would speak to the skipper of the fishing-boat. Just as he was about to do so, the latter put his hands round about his mouth, and shouted the welcome news, 'Eddystone light right ahead, sir.' 'Thank you,' said the captain, and he had no sooner put his vessel on her course again than, sure enough, like the red glow of an incandescent light when the current is first switched on, there glimmered through the fog the longed-for beam. In a few minutes we were abreast of it, and in another, past it, and—strange to tell—clear of the fog. Then it was 'full steam ahead' till Plymouth port was gained.

"I wonder, will the mists gather as we end our voyage? It may be so. In that case, we shall be glad indeed of a cheering word, whoever speaks it. If a liner may have guidance of a lugger, maybe a little child will lead us, or a leaflet, or a well-worn text. Let some one say distinctly, when the fog is round my soul, 'Cross of Calvary right ahead, sir! Cross of Calvary right ahead, sir!' Ah, yes! I was heading that way surely; but, oh! the mist, the mist. But see, the blood-red glow beckons me—it brightens as I near it. Now is my salvation nearer than when I believed. The fog-bank is safely passed—yonder is the port! 'FULL STEAM AHEAD!'"

"Our Holy War," the theme for 1900, might serve for the present moment. It was partly

sermonic, partly pictorial, with the Corinthian text, "Though we walk after the flesh we do not war after the flesh," as a starting-point. "Our feeble frames, our fading locks, our failing memories, our fainting hearts," he cries, "are welcome if they conspire to lift His glories high." And with a glimpse of self-revelation: "O brethren, my heart is heavy at my own folly! What though our services and sermons have never been of the garnished sort, what though we have not departed from the old paths in doctrine, I am painfully conscious that I have not so fully trusted the Word of truth, and the power of God, as I ought to, and as I *meant* to. Self has crept in. Oh! the folly of it, for self is fatal to real blessing and true success." At the hearing of which words I am sure that in every man's heart there was a sigh.

"One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," was the subject for 1901. Following the experience of the Simultaneous Mission of the Free Church Federation, in which he had heartily shared, Mr. Spurgeon emphasized the continued need for the Baptist witness. With McCheyne he said, "I bless God we live in witnessing times." The hearts of the Conference were moved as with common impulse when he said, "Thomas Carlyle says that Danton, when the tumult in poor France was growing shrill, exclaimed—'Peace, O peace with one another! Are we not alone against the world: a little band of brothers?'" Then he urged that we should have some of the old-time blessing when we got back to the old-time practices, and with an illustration again taken from the sea, he re-read three

points of the compass which formed the title of the discourse.

The address of 1902 on "Increase our faith" is best remembered by the parable of the starling, to which reference was made for years afterwards. But there were other memorable things. The prayer is, "Increase neither funds, nor friends, nor fame, unless Thou pleasest, but *our faith*." "We can urge upon them a generous spirit like that which Turner evinced when he took down one of his own pictures that the work of an unknown provincial artist might be conspicuously hung." "It is a suggestive thing that the word difficulty occurs but once in the Bible, and then it is in the margin." "I was the happy recipient, while laid aside, of many helpful messages. I was glad of them all, but you will wonder at the text that comforted me most. It read thus: 'And after this lived Job an hundred and forty years.' I cannot tell you what a lift this gave me. It made me laugh for one thing; it also made me hope. I began to realize that there was an 'After this' for me also."

Then came the piece about the starling. "May I tell you a parable by which, perchance, a faint-hearted warrior may be stimulated? A certain minister had had influenza with complications. Lying on his bed, no longer seriously ill, but weak and low, he listened to the birds that announced the coming of the springtime. A glossy starling came, morning by morning, to the gable of a neighbouring house, and having announced his arrival by a long, sweet call, like a note of exclamation and one of interrogation combined, began his

special tune. He seemed to look the invalid in the face as he said again and again, 'Give it up; give it up.' 'That,' thought the listener, 'is the decision I had almost come to; strange that a bird of the air should carry it. The task is too great for me. My work is done in that sphere at least.' Just then, the starling cried again, 'Give it up; give it up.'

"At that moment the door was opened, and the minister's wife entered. 'My dear,' said he, in rather dolorous tones, 'I have had a message unmistakably from Heaven.' 'Indeed,' she said, perhaps a little suspiciously. 'Yes, there's a starling on the gable yonder, that keeps saying to me, "Give it up." Now, you listen.' She did not smile or blame. She knew that the speaker was in sad earnest. She listened, and the bird obliged. Then she listened again. (Wives like to make sure before they express an opinion.) Then the message sounded out more distinctly than ever, and the patient was convinced that no happier interpretation was possible. But a radiant face was turned upon him, and a cheery voice exclaimed, 'Why, he says, "Keep it up; keep it up," as plainly as a starling can. Listen again.' So they listened, the two of them. 'So he does,' said the already encouraged convalescent, 'it is "Keep it up," as plain as can be.' Whereupon he blessed his wife, thanked God and took courage, and almost begged the starling's pardon for so misinterpreting his joyful song.

"Comrades, we must 'keep it up.' Nothing must be given up. Keep up your courage. Keep

up your faith. Keep up your hope. Keep up the Cross. Keep up your strenuous toiling, and so, keep up the blessed cause. It is not for long. The dayspring is at hand. Jesus will be where we are, till we can be where He is. Oh, for increased faith, that we may hold Him fast!"

The topic for 1903 was "Pulpit Supplies." After a graceful reference to the preachers known by this name on their occasional visits, the recent voyage to the Canaries on ss. *Axion* was laid under contribution, to illustrate "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." There is also the supply of texts for sermons. Tholuck well said that "every sermon should have Heaven for its father and Earth for its mother." Teneriffe supplied the thought, "Our hearers should see the Mount of Atonement from every standpoint. Tone and temper, new views of truth, illustrations and utterance will all be supplied. Holy boldness, too." Mr. Spurgeon then quoted the divisions of one of his own sermons, and added that on the following Monday, at the prayer meeting, one of the brethren thanked God for the word of the Sabbath, and the sub-divisions, saying they had been ringing in his ear like sweet-toned bells the livelong day. "And what, think you, happened next? Why!—those sub-heads began to chime for *me*. Oh, how delightsomely they rang! I was compelled to listen to those charming bells. And this is what they said.

> What God has done, our God *can* do—
> Can do what He has done!
> Who from the pit His chosen drew,
> Who all their glorious vict'ries won,
> Can do what He has done!

Sweet bells of hope, ring out anew,
He Rahab cut, the dragon slew,
He can His former acts renew,
Can do what He has done!

What God has done our God *will* do,
He'll do what He has done!
He keeps His covenant in view,
He is the never changing One,
He'll do what He has done!
Sweet bells of faith, ring out anew,
His mercies are not small, nor few,
His love, though old, is ever new,
He'll do what He has done!

What God has done, our God will *crown*—
He'll crown what He has done!
Best wine at last is His renown,
The brightest part may be outdone,
He'll crown what He has done!
Sweet bells, ring out o'er all the Town,
Poor Mansoul's fears for ever drown;
God's wont has been, the ages down,
To crown what He has done."

These words, set to music by Mr. G. W. Gregory, whose prayer suggested them, were thereafter sung by Madame Annie Ryall.

"The Baptist" was the subject for 1904. "He was the clasp of the Covenants, the loop which couples Old and New Testaments. *He thought and taught imperially;* and while he was yet speaking the King appeared." "O men of God, declare God's truth at all hazards. It does not need toning down, nor trimming up." A fine description of a lunar rainbow scene in the Tasmanian bush prompts the reflection that "a solar rainbow at its worst outshines a lunar rainbow at its best."

After quoting Wordsworth on "Daffodils," there comes the personal witness. "I sometimes take a glance at a precious note-book, containing a list of those who professed decision for Jesus during my evangelistic tours. I read the names, and, in many instances, recall the cases:

> "And then my heart with pleasure fills,
> And dances with the daffodils."

"God's Fellow-Workers" was the subject for 1905. It was given on the heels of a remarkable time of blessing at the Tabernacle, and has an afterglow in it. "'When God loved He loved a world, and when He gave He gave His Son,' said Peter Mackenzie. 'The Master is come and calleth for thee,' said Sister Dora to herself, every time she opened the hospital gate at dead of night."

The next year's topic was like unto it, "Ambassadors for Christ." Because we occupy this high position—"Away with apologies and compromises. Away with unprepared sermons and half-hearted prayers and slovenly services. Away with untidiness of person and hastiness of speech, and meanness of disposition and littleness of mind. Away with self-seeking, and worldly-mindedness, and frivolity." The story of the stately Scotch divine lingered in the minds of the meeting. Being received at a cottage, as he thought too familiarly, he said, "'Woman, I am the servant of the Lord, come to speak with you on the concerns of your soul!' 'Then you'll be humble, like your Master,' admirably rejoined the cottager."

"It has been asserted that there are in the Bible

no less than twenty thousand promises. I like to think of them as my Master's carriages, which He keeps for His people to ride in. 'The chariots of God are twenty thousand.' Some one said to me a while ago, rather superciliously I thought; 'Have you many carriage folk now at the Tabernacle?' 'Why, bless your heart,' I answered, 'we are all carriage folk.' Then I explained the mystery to him, for he was fairly astonished, I assure you. One of my faithful people, when he heard the story, declared he would never walk to the Tabernacle again. (He evidently had not been one of the carriage folk until then.) I related the incident at a public meeting a few weeks since, and while I was hurrying off to another engagement, a good woman hastened after me, despite the rain and mud, and exclaimed, 'I say, Mr. Spurgeon, I'm going to come to chapel in a carriage now!' She was gone ere I could add, 'And not to chapel only, mind you ride in it to every place, and to every duty.'"

The college motto "*Et Teneo, et Teneor*," was the text of the address in 1907, the Jubilee year. "A critic, who came to the Tabernacle a while ago, was pleased to declare that so far as he could judge, there were not more than six persons of consequence and culture present. I will venture to say that there was not one person, say what we may about the culture, who was not of consequence—to Jesus. An Indian, who had been a Hindu, said, 'When I became a Mohammedan, it was I who embraced Mohammedanism, but when I became a Christian, it was Christ Who embraced me.'

Richard Tange used to say, 'We launched the "Great Eastern," and she launched us.'"

For 1908 there was "A Comfortable Vision." The seven-branched lampstand which Zechariah saw was the subject. "I have been helped to word this by a sweet poem, which a brother beloved forwarded to me in my exile. I quote it, trusting it may help you also.

"It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining daffodils;
In every dimpled drop I see
Wild flowers on the hills:
The clouds of grey engulf the day
And overwhelm the town,
It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining roses down!

"It isn't raining rain to me
But fields of clover bloom,
Where any buccaneering bee
May find a bed and room;
A health to him that's happy,
A fig for him that frets!
It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining violets!"

The final act in the vision, when the topstone is brought forth, called forth a peroration which thrilled the hearers:

"I have tried to realize the scene. The news has reached the City of the Great King that the last of the prodigals is coming home; so the kind angels are crowding to the gate. Gay garlands garnish all the streets. Fair flags are fluttering everywhere. The bells ring merrily. The city is *en fête*. The Lamb, Who is the lamp thereof, sheds

His brightest lustre on the walls of jasper and the streets of gold. Those streets are thronged with ransomed souls, 'clothed in white robes and palms in their hands.' An unusual joy surprises these blest inhabitants of Zion.

"And now the supreme moment has arrived. Escorted by a phalanx of the heavenly host, there climbeth up the steeps on which the Eternal City stands the last believer to quit the Vale of Tears. The crest of the heavenly hill is reached. The cavalcade sweeps in. The gate of pearl swings to, upon its golden pivot. The crowd is closing in, and the long procession presses to the Throne. One word resounds from every lip—the sweet word Grace. The happy angels shout it—Grace, grace! The four and twenty elders shout it—Grace, grace! The spirits of just men made perfect shout it—Grace, grace! The noble army of martyrs shout it—Grace, grace! The glorious company of the Apostles shout it—Grace, grace! But there is one voice that rises high above the rest—that of the prodigal himself. He is keeping a promise that he made on earth,

> "'Then, loudest of the crowd I'll sing,
> While heaven's eternal arches ring
> With shouts of sovereign grace.'

"And then, methought a reverent silence fell upon the multitude that no man can number, as 'the Son of His love' said unto His Father, 'Here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given me, I have lost none. They are saved by grace;' and then—and then—the innumerable company took

up the strain, and sent the echo back again. It was like the sound of many waters. Grace, grace! Grace, grace!

> Grace all the work shall crown
> Through everlasting days,
> It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
> And well deserves the praise!"

"The Land of Havilah" was the somewhat fanciful title of the 1909 address, though it was intensely practical. The artist is in evidence in the illustrations. "A successful artist told me the other day, that when he first turned to water-colours as a medium, he used no less than sixty-four pigments. 'Now,' he said, 'I find five or six sufficient.' There is a story of Stanhope Forbes, of Newlyn. Says a burly fisherman, who had been watching operations: 'I can mind you paintin' down here, along twenty years ago, Mr. Forbes. Ain't you tired of it yet?' And the painter laughs as he picks up his kit, and climbs to his home at the top of the hill. And we—brethren—we who love the Book, are not tired of it, but more enamoured of it than ever." This address contained two of Mr. Spurgeon's own poems—"I'm happy all the time," and "What a beautiful morning that will be."

One of the greatest sermons C. H. S. ever preached was from Job's words, "I have yet to speak on God's behalf." T. S. took the revised margin, "There are yet words for God," as the text of his next address in 1910, "Words for God." "For each of the Holy Three we must speak; for

the Book; for the Gospel; for every righteous cause; for the missionary enterprise." This was the prelude to a memorable missionary Conference.

In 1911 the title of the address, which was built on the incident of Joshua and the man with the drawn sword, was "The Church and its Captain." The Church was considered in relation to its Head, and to its inner life. The illustration which caught the fancy of the men was of an artist who "was visiting a little tidal harbour in 'glorious Devon,' in search of 'a bit' for his brush, and said to an old fisherman, 'Is the tide making or falling?' 'Well,' said he, after looking round as if he had not noticed the tide before, 'it's about half-tide, sir, and when it begins to make again, I reckon (this with a keen glance out to sea) we'll get a blow from the east'ard. Most mysterious thing, this tide, sir; why the moon attracts it; and why the wind rises with it as it mostly does, most mysterious thing, sir, but' (with a sweep of the hand toward the half-empty harbour)—'but THERE IT IS.' And the artist, who by the way, preaches too, bethought him of the Spirit and the Word, and the cleansing tide, and of the miracles that have been daily wrought, and he said within himself, 'Most mysterious thing, but THERE IT IS;' and he determined that he would be in league with those mysterious and omnipotent forces."

The address ended with the sentence from one of his father's letters: "Go on with the Gospel, for it is of God, and that which is of God will see all the others at Jericho among the tumbling houses."

One of the greatest Conference addresses was given in 1912—"Salvation by Grace." It was not only published in *The Sword and Trowel*, but in *Fundamentals*, that series of booklets for which Dr. Dixon was responsible in America. Quoting with approval the definition given by Thomas Phillips, in his great sermon at the Philadelphia Congress, "Grace is something in God which is at the heart of all His redeeming activities, the downward stoop and reach of God, God bending from the height of His majesty to touch and grasp our insignificance and poverty," and following it with great words on grace from Dr. Dale, Dr. Maclaren, and Dr. Jowett, he recalled Hart's quaint verse—the verse which Dr. Horton quotes in his biography with some amusement:

> "Everything we do we sin in,
> Chosen Jews
> Must not use
> Woollen mixt with linen."

"No article can be broken beyond repair—*the more it is smashed the better we like it*," was the sentence read in a rivetter's shop window; "and I said within myself, 'Thus it is with the grace of God, and as long as I live I will tell poor sinners so.'"

The address had a fine passage toward the end: "An unusual opportunity was once afforded me of viewing the vessel on which I was a passenger, before the voyage was quite complete. After nearly three months in a sailing ship, we were greeted by a harbour tug, whose master doubtless hoped for the task of towing us into port. There

was, however, a favourable breeze, which, though light, promised to hold steady. So the tug's services were declined. Anxious to earn an honest penny her master ranged alongside the clipper, and transhipped such passengers as cared to get a view from another deck of the good ship that had brought them some fifteen thousand miles. You may be sure I was one of them. A delightful experience it was to draw away from our floating home, to mark her graceful lines, her towering masts, her tapering yards, her swelling sails—the white wave curling at her fore-feet, and the green wake winding astern. From our new view-point items that had grown familiar were invested with fresh interest. There was the wheel to which we had seen six seamen lashed in time of storm, and there the binnacle whose sheltered compass had been so constantly studied since the start, and there the chart-house with its treasures of wisdom, and yonder the huge fluked anchors, and over all the network of ropes—a tangle to the uninitiated. Even the smoke from the galley-fire inspired respect as we remembered the many meals that appetites, sharpened by the keen air of the southern seas, had fastened upon. And yonder is the port of one's own cabin! What marvellous things had been viewed through that narrow peephole, and what sweet sleep had been enjoyed beneath it, 'rocked in the cradle of the deep.' Oh! it was a brave sight, that full-rigged ship, so long our ocean home, which, despite contrary winds and cross-currents, and terrifying gales and tantalizing calms, had half compassed the globe, and had

brought her numerous passengers and valuable freight across the trackless leagues in safety. Do you wonder that we cheered the staunch vessel, and her skilful commander, and the ship's company again and again? I hear the echoes of those hurrahs to-day. Do you wonder that we gave thanks for a prosperous voyage by the will of God, and presently stepped back from the tug-boat to the ship without question that what remained of the journey would be soon and successfully accomplished?"

The reputation of Thomas Spurgeon might well rest on that bit of descriptive writing, not to be excelled and seldom to be equalled, in all sermon literature, or in any other literature; and when he came to apply it to the good ship "FREE GRACE," is it any wonder that the men stood and cheered, and that the speaker was taken to their hearts for ever?

"We have, perchance, a few more leagues to cover," he said, in concluding. "We may even stand off and on a while near the harbour mouth, but, please God, we shall have abundant entrance at last. To-day we have circled the ship, and I call on every passenger to bless her in the name of the Lord, and to shout the praise of Him Who owns and navigates her. All honour and blessing be unto the God of Grace, and unto the Grace of God! Ten thousand, thousand thanks to Jesus! and to the blessed Spirit equal praise!"

"The Preacher's Purpose" was the theme for 1913. Speaking of naturalness in delivery, "'There is room for a natural painter,' said Constable,

and forthwith filled the void by selecting homely themes and treating them artlessly—by which I do not mean unskilfully. 'I have always succeeded best with my nature scenes,' he said, 'they have always charmed, and I hope they always will.' And *they always did*! If we are to preach of sin we cannot make it too sinful, or man's state by nature too desperate. When Turner mourned the passing of Wilkie, he painted a picture of his death at sea. 'You are painting the sails very black,' said Stanfield. He replied, 'If I could find anything blacker than black I would use it.' While still a village preacher C. H. Spurgeon used to say, 'Souls, souls, souls. I hope this rings in my ears, and hurries me on.' "

"Sweet Spring" was a fragrant message for 1914. Spring in the soil, in the sky, in the sea, at the sepulchre, in the soul, in the study, in the school, in the sanctuary. It would need to be all quoted to catch its charm.

"Our Most Delightful Guest," the address for 1915, was not delivered owing to the President's illness, but it had been printed in preparation and was distributed. It is a fitting climax to the series of addresses, ending on the note that would have been chosen had Mr. Spurgeon known it was to be his last. "Inviting me to a certain church to preach, my correspondent said, by way of further inducement, 'We will give you a spikenard welcome.' I am sure that is the kind of welcome that befits the Spirit. When Mr. Moody—grand, rugged, tender-hearted Moody—I having begged a corner in the hearts and prayers of the people—said

bluntly, 'Not a bit of it, we've got no *corners* in our hearts for Spurgeon's son. Come right along,' I fancy that was a spikenard welcome."

The message in 1916 was but a fragment, brief but delightful: the topic "A Bridge-Building Brotherhood." "The task before us is noble, joyful, responsible, and will be well paid. Every stone must be well and truly laid. Woe—woe to the spiritual jerry builder! 'Sir,' said a builder's foreman breathlessly, 'all that row of houses has collapsed.' Whereupon, the master replied, wrathfully, 'Didn't I tell you not to take down the scaffolding till you had put up the wall-papers?' In just such flimsy fashion some have built bridges, which have proved refuges of lies."

In 1917 the Conference itself, owing to war conditions, was greatly curtailed, being restricted to one day, and Mr. Spurgeon was too ill to be present. In 1918 another brief session was held, and it fell to Mr. F. A. Jackson and me to deliver memorial tributes to our friend. In the corner sat Mrs. Spurgeon and her daughter, and we all shared their grief. Who can tell what the next Conference will reveal, or whether there will ever be another?

CHAPTER XVII

TRAVEL SCENES

When I was guest in the Spurgeon home in 1900, it was arranged that we should visit Paris and Switzerland together that summer. So in July, only waiting for the Christian Endeavour Convention at the Alexandra Palace, we set forth—Mr. and Mrs. Spurgeon, Mrs. Fullerton, and I. At the last moment a perplexity arose, for Manton Smith, my comrade in mission service for fifteen years, died the day before, and I scarcely knew whether to go or stay. At length it was arranged that I should accompany the party to Paris, and return for my friend's funeral. But on the way I heard that the funeral had to be hastened, and so it came to pass that I was unable to show a last tribute of love to the honoured man with whom my life had been so happily linked. Instead, I had to content myself with writing six or eight appreciations of him for various journals at odd times during our early Paris days.

My friend, Dr. Reuben Saillens, had kindly arranged accommodation for us, though in the Exhibition year it was rather difficult. When I first wrote he thought it would be impossible, but one of his members at the church, which was then in the Rue Meslay, going on holiday, vacated his appartement in the Rue Fourcroy for us, and so

during our stay we had a little suite of four rooms three stories up, with a housekeeper who came in the morning and left in the afternoon. Needless to say, we came into close contact : the dining-room was so tiny that those who came in last had to go out first, for there was no room to pass. Here I had the joy of introducing Monsieur and Madame Saillens to my fellow-travellers. Mr. Spurgeon fell ill during our stay, and when we called in Dr. Monod to advise us, I remember amongst other things he said, in his charming English, " You English are so funny. You think that eggs make you bilious because they are yel—low !"

For a week we did full justice to the " Exposition," and Mr. Spurgeon, unable to start for Switzerland on the appointed day, followed us there some days later, Mrs. Spurgeon, on account of the children, being compelled to return home.

That prolonged stay at Riederfurka was a time of unalloyed joy. I have been there so often that it almost seems like home to me, but to him it had all the charm of magnificent novelty. The châlet where we had our rooms, facing the little hotel, looks on one side to the Rhone Valley, and on the other to the Aletsch glacier, the largest in Europe. On the ridge the only other house is the pretentious villa built by Sir Ernest Cassel, who has chosen his site well. On the south is a splendid panorama of snow peaks, Monte Leone, Fletschorn, Monte Rosa, and others ; on the north, Fieschorn, Finsteraarhorn, and others ; and, after a walk of five minutes, the great stretch of the glacier to the east ; and one of the most superb views in the

Alps in the west—Mischabel and Weisshorn, with the Matterhorn between.

Excursions on the hillside were varied by descents to the ice. As my wife sketched, Mr. Spurgeon resumed his work with the pencil, which he had laid aside for a while, and I read to both the artists as they vied with each other in catching the glories of the view. Across the glacier is Bel Alp with the cottage beyond built by Professor Tyndall at the foot of the Sparrenhorn, which, in their early days, Mr. Spurgeon's father and mother had climbed, afterwards crossing the very ridge where we had our dwelling, then bare and unappreciated, seven thousand feet above the level of the sea.

One day we were gladdened by the arrival of a great party of friends, who were journeying in the contrary direction—Mr. and Mrs. Higgs and family, Mr. and Mrs. Amsden and friends, with a retinue of porters, and after some photographs were taken, we had the pleasure of escorting them to the place where the ice could be the easiest crossed.

Another day we went to the Concordia Hut, high up, just beneath the south face of the Jungfrau, and we spent the night there, literally under the snow, for our blankets were white with it in the morning. On the return journey Mr. Spurgeon, who had only an alpenstock to help him, accidentally dropped it as we were crossing some difficult ice, and away it went glissading towards a crevasse, where it fortunately stuck, and was presently recovered by our guide. The traveller sitting on his mackintosh on a hummock of ice the while,

unable to move, was less happy than I have ever seen him anywhere else.

We had a royal time together, and afterwards, making a short tour by the Grimsel and the Brunig to Lucerne, with a brief visit to Murren, where we saw a double rainbow more vivid than any of us ever conceived rainbows could be, the holiday ended with a very closely cemented friendship. When he got home, Mr. Spurgeon wrote : " I shall never cease to rejoice over this happy holiday, the best I have ever had."

A close friendship also began with Dr. Saillens. Already they had known each other by correspondence, and Mr. Spurgeon had taken a deep interest in the French students of the Pastors' College ; now he took under his wing the English Auxiliary, which helps to evangelize France, and very greatly helped it in the coming years. On October 25th, 1900, he writes : " The trustees have fallen in with my suggestion as to helping Pasteur Saillens. M. Blocher is to be known as our agent."

At the invitation of M. le Pasteur he visited Paris again with Mrs. Spurgeon a few years later. " We wanted our people to know him," writes the eloquent French pastor, " and we felt that his message to them would be most beneficial. There is another consideration, equally important, which prompted us to urge him to come. Before the war there were always a large number of English and American residents in Paris, besides the multitudes of tourists who come for a few days or a few weeks to enjoy the sights and pleasures of our capital. We have heard an estimate, which

seems fairly accurate : there were thirty thousand English-speaking settlers in Paris and its suburbs. Of that number only a small proportion were connected with the churches, while the vast majority —shop-assistants, clerks, art-students, etc.—had no sort of religious life. Away from home-restraining influences, many of these young people caught the worldly spirit, which was so prevalent in Paris, even more badly than the real Parisians ; for in this, as in the case of some infectious diseases, it often happens that new-comers get it even worse than the natives.

" How Paris has changed since then !

" For all these reasons we were anxious that our dear friend should come to us for as long a period as possible ; but he was not able to give us more than a week or so in the spring of 1902. Our mission church was full, both on Sunday and through the week. Mr. Spurgeon was a most easy speaker to interpret. Our people were delighted with him. He also preached in English in the Roquépine Methodist Chapel, a beautiful building situated right in the midst of the fashionable quarter, and that place also was full. He made a deep impression.

" I remember our trip to Chantilly by motor-car, which became so unmanageable by the way that we were compelled to return by train to be in time for the evening meeting. There are few men whom it has been so delightful to welcome under our roof. Since then many have been the occasions when we have worked, conversed, prayed together in London. He was changed physically, but he was as gentle, peaceful, submitted—and as bright, too—as we had ever seen him."

It will be remembered, as set forth in Chapter VI., that his first Continental visit was with his father to Mentone. Already we have mentioned the visit to Carlsbad in 1907. From thence he moved to Garmisch and Levico, where Mrs. Spurgeon joined him, and in a little while they went together for a tour to Venice, Florence, Rome and Genoa, returning to Meran in the Tyrol for the winter. Here the invalid settled down to take the cure. Mrs. Spurgeon left him, as they had let their house in London, and there were many things there needing attention; but he was soon joined by his dear friend, William Higgs, afterwards by Dr. McCaig, and still later, by Mr. F. A. Jackson, who for *The Sword and Trowel*, March 1908, wrote a charming article on his visit. He says: "The surroundings of Meran are commanding and interesting. Först, Naturno, Tirol, Schöeuna, Lana, Marling—Mr. Spurgeon has made a sketch in each place. We would go out in the morning after breakfast, and select a suitable position for a picture; then I would leave him to his work, in which he became quite absorbed, wander further afield, and come back to him later in the day. The sketching has been of real interest to him, and a distinct boon. Levico, Garmisch, Genoa, Bozen, Meran, all bear witness, in his portfolio, to his gift and skill with the brush." In *The Sword and Trowel* for the following month Mr. Jackson also contributed a fine poem on "Meran."

Mr. Spurgeon returned to England in time for the College Conference, over which he presided with much ability and acceptance. In his presidential address there are two references to the

Tyrol. "Tradition says that Duke Frederick of the Tyrol, unjustly nicknamed 'of the empty pocket,' by way of refutation of the libel, erected the golden roof at Innsbruck. Let those who are disposed to forget how opulent God is call to mind the golden roof that He has built." "Divine erections are unruinable. I have sojourned a long time in the Tyrol, where ruined castles abound. A while ago a castle could be bought for something less than a five pound note. They have lasted longer than the armies and the pomp of which they are now almost the only relics, but they themselves have nearly passed away. The Spirit builds for eternity."

On three occasions Norway was visited: the first time in company with Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Slater, of Liverpool, in August, 1905; the second, with Mr. W. Mannington, of Robertsbridge; and the third, with his son on his coming of age in 1912; but no details of these journeys are available. In 1904, in company with the Slaters, he crossed to New York just for the sake of the voyage, returning by the next boat. The Sunday evening was spent as listeners in Dr. MacArthur's church; after the service, when they made themselves known, Dr. MacArthur was so overjoyed to see Mr. Spurgeon that he kissed him on both cheeks. In 1903, in the company of Mr. James Hall of the Tabernacle, the Canary Islands were visited, and in 1902 a voyage round the British Islands is reported to Mr. Slater in a series of postcards. In 1906 a projected visit to the States, to take the services in Tremont Temple, Boston, during July and August, had to be cancelled owing to ill-health.

At one time Mr. Spurgeon indulged the hope of visiting the Continental churches—Dutch, German, Scandinavian, Russian,—and had gone so far in his thinking out the plan as to choose his companions for the journey; but that is only one of the things that might-have-been.

He always had the traveller's heart, and was never so happy as when he was visiting new scenes or moving forward amid surroundings that were familiar. He delighted to watch a good cricket match, and was at home on the golf links, but even at ordinary times his most refreshing holiday was a few hours spent on board one of the river steamers which go out as far as Walton-on-the-Naze. Southwold was his favourite holiday resort; here Mr. F. A. Jackson often spent a week with him, as also at Ilkley, Shanklin, and Brighton. With Mrs. Spurgeon he visited for holiday Scotland, Jersey, Derbyshire, Berwick, Blackpool, the Isle of Man, and, in later artist days, Devon and Cornwall. His mind never seemed to turn either to the Far East or to the Near East, his early colonial experience, perhaps, giving him a bias toward civilizations and countries that were new rather than those that were ancient; but always his chief joy was the sea, the wide and the open sea. Not without justification did his father in playful mood call him "his stormy petrel."

That he could make good use in the pulpit of the incidents of travel will be seen by his description of an experience of his during his visit to Ireland.

"It was my lot last Monday to visit a place some twenty miles, I suppose, from the city of Dublin,

a favourite resort for pleasure-seekers and holiday-makers; one of the most striking and beautiful bits of scenery to be discovered even in fair Ireland. I looked from the top of a gigantic archway down into the depths of a sunlit valley. A roaring cascade leaped under my feet, and far down in the bottom of the glade I saw the red coats of the soldiery, for a military picnic, you must know, was in progress, and the soldiers and their wives and children were enjoying themselves in this picturesque spot. Presently, I and my friends descended, looked up at the falling waters and gazed at the tall trees that almost spanned the gulf and, with their bright and fresh green leaves, beautified and blest the scene.

"Walking a while amongst the pathways under the steep precipice, my eyes presently discovered, clinging to the rock half-way up the cliff, the form of a young man. I said to the friend who stood beside me, 'See yonder man, what does he there? Is he not in a most dangerous predicament? He cannot ascend, for the cliff is too steep above him; he dare not look down, or he would be broken to shivers at the foot of the precipice.' And, as I looked, my heart beat high with anxiety, till I saw that he was calling out for help, and that some of his brother soldiers on the top of the cliff had heard his cry and were hastening to his relief. Even to me the seconds seemed like minutes, and the minutes grew, or seemed to grow, to hours. What, think you, did they seem to him, who at any instant might have been dashed to his death!

"There seemed to me to be a good share of bustle

and confusion. Hither and thither the men were running. Presently, to my great rejoicing, I saw one hurry up the pathway with a rope. It looked to me to be all too thin and frail and scarcely long enough, and so, indeed, it proved to be; for, as they tried to shake it down to this poor, clinging lad, it soon appeared that it could not reach him. If it had reached him, I doubt very much if it would have borne his weight and sufficed to pull him up to safety. There was still further delay, but presently we beheld strong men, with strong ropes, hastening to their comrade's rescue. They tied a heavy piece of wood to the end of the rope and then shook it down the acclivity—which, though very steep, was cumbered with the trunks and roots of trees—that so the rope might reach the man; and presently—much to our joy we beheld it—the rope reached him and he reached it, for you may be sure he strove as much as he was able to embrace that saving cord. He clutched it with both his hands, and then to my surprise—for I thought he must have been by that time exhausted—he began to climb the cliff. I think he must have been a sailor once, though a soldier now, for he scrambled up that rope hand over fist, and I heard a cheer and voices of congratulation when he was safe once more; and as I saw it, this text came more forcibly than it has ever done before to my mind, 'He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters'; for certain it is that this poor man had not only been dashed in pieces, but had been submerged by the roaring waters, too, if deliverance had not arrived."

CHAPTER XVIII

TREASURED LETTERS

When the Spurgeons moved to their latest and smallest home, by mutual agreement they burned the letters they had written to each other during the years; there were so many of them and such little room. They also destroyed quite a number of others which his biographer wishes had been preserved. As it is, a few hidden in odd corners escaped the fire, and a few others were counted precious enough to be reserved in the day of burning.

There is, for instance, a note from George Müller, signed "yours affectionately in the Lord"; a letter from F. B. Meyer, written on behalf of one hundred and twenty ministers, assuring Mr. Spurgeon of their sympathy as he began his work at the Tabernacle; one from J. G. Greenhough protesting against an unfair paragraph in *The Freeman* in reference to the settlement at the Tabernacle, and expressing in felicitous terms his personal good wishes; one from Professor W. W. Clow, with the interesting paragraph, "May I say that, as I spent my boyhood in Auckland, N.Z., my interest in your work has a certain

depth of colour, apart from the more enduring and nobler reasons which make your name and your ministry of the Word so much to be revered"; one from Joseph Cook, congratulating him on being called to London, "The soul of your sainted father, I have no doubt, is your guardian spirit." There is also a note from a publishing firm, acknowledging Mr. Spurgeon's criticism of a book: "No doubt there must be a good deal in the view you have adopted of this little tale, and, whilst I have had many other criticisms from clergymen, I have none dictated in the same spirit as yours. Still, as I say, I thank you for it, and it has been the means of making me decide not, under any circumstances, to publish it in any of our papers"—an interesting sidelight on the hidden influence of a religious leader. There is also a very grateful letter from his grandfather, Rev. John Spurgeon.

Two letters may be transcribed in full: one from Dr. Parker, dated December 20th, 1893; the other from General Booth, dated January 29th, 1907.

"DEAR MR. SPURGEON,

"I want you to do me a favour. I am tired. I must rest a while. Within the period of my rest one Thursday occurs—*viz.* Thursday, January 11th. I want you to take my 12 o'clock service at the City Temple on that day. Do it, and thus please us all. We divide the collection into equal parts, one for you, one for us."

"I leave the case with your generous heart,

"Ever cordially yours,

"JOSEPH PARKER."

Mr. Spurgeon did not accept the invitation, nor later, at the opening of the new Tabernacle, when Dr. Parker indirectly conveyed to him his willingness to speak at the opening services, did Mr. Spurgeon invite him. But on December 8th, 1902, he wrote to a friend: "Dr. Parker has gone. So soon after Hugh Price Hughes' sudden departure. I was at the funeral service in each case. One forgets even the 'open letter' at the open grave."

The Salvation Army letter was evidently most grateful.

"DEAR PASTOR SPURGEON,

"I fear I was somewhat physically under the effort at my meeting at the Tabernacle the other evening, but I hope a large amount of good was done. I am sorry you were unable to be with us.

"Please receive herewith cheque for fifty pounds towards your Spurgeon College Jubilee Fund. May God give you and your fellow-workers every blessing.

"Very sincerely,
"WILLIAM BOOTH."

From his old friend, Rev. Levi Palmer, of Taunton, a letter dated October 9th, 1900, has been preserved, with the comment in the corner, "a Treasure, indeed, T. S." "Well done, my strong friend," his correspondent writes, "you have passed through what not one minister in ten thousand is ever called to face. Now remember!

if thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. And yet God's Elijahs pass from Carmel to Horeb, and from victory to despondency. Maybe, by the time this reaches you, you will have been brought down into the valley: if so do not forget the sights you had when on the mountain."

Several letters speak of blessing through the ministry of the Word, and one old lady declares, "The very way you say the name of Jesus makes me love Him more." In one of his sermons he says: "I am by no means able to keep all the letters I receive, but there are some amongst them that never find a resting-place in the grate or the waste-paper basket. I have a whole sheaf of them by now. I look at them with tearful eyes and thankful heart sometimes. These letters tell of blessings received through sermons, addresses, and letters. I like to spread them before the Lord, and say, 'Lord, the praise for this belongs to Thee.' I am grateful to those friends who tell me of the blessings they have received, but all glory be to God, for it was He Who gave the seed, and then made it fruitful." But that sheaf of letters has disappeared.

Letters from his father have been drawn upon in other chapters. It must suffice here to give a few extracts from others. They show the delightful relations between father and son.

"When you have need tell me, and it will not be in vain."

In sending a wedding gift: "I have never had much for self or son because the work needs it, and

must have it. In all your future way the God of our fathers watch over you for good, and make you a blessing to the nations."

There are two letters from Mentone: "These olive groves remind me of you, and make me feel how much I lose by your distance from me. Still, the Lord's work is all the better done by your being in the southern world, and so let it be.

"Your father in the flesh and
"Your brother in Christ,
"C. H. SPURGEON."

"In this lovely retreat I cannot but remember those happy times when you were here with me, and made even the Riviera sun more bright."

From Westwood there are letters on all sorts of topics, but love is in them all.

"January 8th is our silver wedding day. How old your parents are getting! They love their dear sons more and more, and have nothing but joy in them. Our golden blessing rests upon you evermore. Your mother loves you as much as Rebekah did Jacob, and we have no Esau. Your father joys in his absent Jacob as much as in his firstborn. You are more of Israel than Jacob, there will, therefore, be no need to suppose that we suspect you of any of Jacob's faults. You will not come home with twelve sons and a daughter, for you will not have a Leah to be the envy of Rachel, who will be the *una sola*.

"All my heart flies out to you."

"I can't write letters like you, but I love you as much as if I could write from here to New

Zealand, and all in capital letters. I have only joy in thinking of you. God bless you!"

"You are daily my delight. The Lord strengthen you is my heart's prayer. Shall I ever see you with these spectacled eyes? I see you now with the eyes of my heart."

"The Lord spare you long to the Church for which you have done so much, and to your parents to whose hearts you are so dear. I pray heaven's reserved benediction may descend upon you in a manner beyond that which any other has enjoyed. My love is ever with you as it communes with you."

"How I joy in God because of you! Son of my heart, the Lord be praised for making you so firm in the faith, so zealous for souls, so regardless of man's opinion. The Lord be with you and give you long life, and power from on high yet more abundantly. Be whose you may, it will be all one to me if God is glorified in you. My plans about having you to assist me were scattered to the wind, and I have never dreamed again of the matter. The Lord has called you to stand foot to foot with me, the whole earth between; so keep your footing and God bless you. Yet may we live to meet again, not once or twice."

"Dear Son, need I say how much I love you. I will not attempt to do more than to say again, 'God bless you.' Happy will be the day when my eyes behold you. I put you again into my heavenly Father's hand. None but He shall have my son. May His presence be a bright reality to you!"

"I hope you are cheered by the smile of our Great Father. He will not fail you. You have

had a heavy dose of bitters, and I doubt not it will brace you if only it does not burden your heart. I rejoice in you, and pray the Lord to bear you up and bear you through, as indeed He will. How I wish I could see you. Get strong, and when I am older and feebler be ready to take my place."

The last letter is dated Mentone, December 15th, 1891:

"As I write I have sweet memories of your delightful companionship with me in this land of the sun. I seem to hear your pleasant voice even now. The Lord bless thee, my son, and thy spouse, and the little one.

"I write this day joyfully because I feel better than for many a month. I am weak, but I have the hope that I have turned the cold corner and am turning to the warmer side of the hill. I am indeed a debtor to my Lord and to the prayers of His people, that I now live in the hope of perfect restoration and in the expectation of future service.

"AND YOUR MOTHER IS HERE. I know it is true for I see her, otherwise I could not believe it. And she is—well—she is splendid. I pray the Lord to guide you in your tried path. I think you must settle somewhere in the Antipodes, because you could not bear the fogs of Old England. My hope is that some city will be grateful yet for your laborious and valuable services. You have yet a glorious work to do. The coming of a family about you points to a pastorate. God will open a door into 'a large place.' God's own true benediction rest upon thee."

Three other letters have unwittingly been pre-

served; a few extracts may fittingly follow those other heart words from father to son. This time it is from the son to the grandson in New Zealand. The first is written on board the Pacific steamer; the letter which had to be repeated to the two-year-old boy innumerable times.

"What do you think is on board the ship. I wonder if mother knows? Shall I tell you? Two lovely gee-gees and ever so many sheep—poor things, they do not look happy, they would rather be in the fields. And what else? Three kangaroos! Only fancy. But they are in big cages. The other day they let one out, and he hopped all round the deck like mother does when she plays at Kangaroo with dear little Harold. One of the kangaroos has died! It was too old to go in the big steamer, and felt very ill, and at last it died, and they threw his body overboard. Aren't you sorry for his poor wife and little Joey? Last night a great big bird flew on deck, with such a funny name. They called him a Booby. We let him go again, and he said, 'Quack, quack,' instead of 'Thank you.' Good-bye, my dear little 'unmitigated humbug.'"

The second letter is from London on August 3rd. "Mother doesn't like water and ships," it says, "because they have taken father away from her, but perhaps they will bring him back some day. Hip, hip, hooray! When father comes marching home."

The third, written the same month, is chiefly about some portraits received from New Zealand. "Harold looks such a dear, laughing, loving little

fellow"; and the fond father's heart goes out in longing for the day they will soon meet again, and sends his love to sister Vera.

Mr. Spurgeon had a genius for letter-writing. As one puts it, "he was a master of affectionate phrasing." In normal times he wrote with his own hand twenty to thirty letters a day; many of these were, of course, brief acknowledgments o gifts or responses to requests made to him, but not a few were worthy of being preserved, as they have been, by many of his friends.

Between Mr. William Higgs and Mr. Spurgeon there existed a very deep friendship for many years. Two letters addressed to him may be taken as samples of others. The first was written after the wreck of a channel steamer, when Mr. and Mrs. Higgs were on board; the second on his Jubilee.

"*Saturday, January 5th*, 1895.

"MY OWN DEAR FRIEND,

"I cannot describe my emotions as I read this morning's paper, nor my gratitude when I found that you were delivered from your extreme peril. It has fallen to your lot to be shipwrecked, and you and yours are monuments of sparing mercy. The Lord be praised!

"My eyes swim with tears at the thought of the danger to which you and your dear ones have been exposed, and my heart swells with joy that you are preserved to one another, and *to me*, and to the work of God. Ah, me! how little do we know what awaits us. I could not help fearing that you would have a stormy passage, though I spoke

cheerily about it to Mrs. Higgs, but I little dreamed of *this*. How unfortunate you seem to be as to crossing over—yet how fortunate! It must have been a very alarming and exciting experience for you all, but I feel sure your brave heart would stay itself upon God, and so grow braver still. How good it was of you to send me a wire. I longed for it, but hardly hoped for it. It has comforted us greatly. We must all give thanks to-morrow in the house of the Lord.

"I am lonely without you, but not *so* lonely as I was a year ago. With loving congratulations,

"I am thankfully yours,

"TOM SPURGEON."

"*May 15th*, 1902.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"I have quite a large assortment of pens, but I don't know which one to use on this occasion. Truth to tell I have none facile enough, none graphic enough to tell you of my thought concerning you and my love for you.

"I thank God that you are spared to be fifty, though I could wish you were growing younger rather than older. Yet 'such is life.' We grow old together. My heart blesses you for all you have been to me and done for me and for my work. The paint and gilt of the Tabernacle owe, if I mistake not, their refreshing to your consideration and liberality. You are always *gilding* something or somebody—bless you!

"I thank God for you, and on your fiftieth birthday I greet you with a very special joy. May

your health improve, and your soul prosper! May you have increasing joy in your dear ones—wife and sons and daughters! May your heart be cheered by the sight of the longed-for blessing at the Tabernacle, and may you ever know assuredly that you are the Pastor's dearest friend.

"My better half bids me greet you on her behalf, and say all sorts of kind things for her. But she must say them herself when she sees you. I am sure you will prefer that.

"May I ask you to accept a little love token. I fear I may not have hit upon an appropriate present. Yet this is a special volume, its main fault being that the *builder* of the Tabernacle is not (for some unaccountable reason) numbered amongst the notables.

"With all kind congratulations and good wishes,

"I am, dear friend,

"Yours affectionately,

"TOM SPURGEON."

Extracts from the hundreds of other letters that have been passed in review must suffice; those sentences have been selected that reveal the heart of the writer rather than the circumstances of the moment. It will not always be necessary even to give dates.

Rev. F. A. Jackson has a wealth of correspondence which yields the following. The dates range from 1906 to 1917.

"So you have taken to the woods again! How I would like to be the other Babe. It is better to

paint one's face (with wind and sun and rain) than the Matterhorn with water-colours."

"I have had a few days on the moors. The heather was past its prime, but the solitude! oh! it was good to be there."

October 21*st*, 1914.—"I must send you a line for I have good news. This evening I received a telegram from Harold as follows, 'Gold medal. Second of all.' I know you will be glad to hear this. He has gone to-day to take up a position in a school as classical tutor, and his address is 'The Abbey, Tipperary.' It is a long way, but he has got there."

Dr. A. McCaig was favoured with hundreds of letters, but many of these are technical. On January 24th, 1905, about the time of the Welsh Revival, Mr. Spurgeon wrote to him: "The spirit of hope is in the Metropolis. It is the harbinger of true reviving. God is about to glorify His great name. I ask constant prayer for my own heart, life, and Church-work." Later in the year: "My muse awoke this morning, and I wrote 'So Shine,' but I am not sure that she would not have done better to sleep on." Next year he writes: "I seem always to be fixing something up: services or shelves or sinners or saints or something"; and again, "I have nothing to say except thanks, thanks, thanks, thanks to God for His wonderful mercy, and thanks to friends innumerable for their gulf stream of tender sympathy,"—this with reference to his Jubilee.

Dr. J. W. Ewing has treasured some letters. To

him Mr. Spurgeon wrote, "Your affectionate greeting greatly gladdened me. I love to be loved. Who does not?" When, at the beginning of 1903, Rye Lane Chapel was renovated, this: "Haven't you an extension scheme on, and won't there be a bringing of grist to the mill one of these fine days? Well, here is a peck of rye for Rye Lane, Peckham. God bless the miller!"

"I myself have been *hors de combat*. I thought to get past the Sunday following the Conference on the crest of the wave, but I slipped into the trough of the sea. I was nearly swamped, but have been in dry dock at Liverpool and Southport. I managed to make the port of 'Sweet Home' under jury rig yesterday, and am now refitting to sail on Sunday next."

"I have been useless enough for two long years," he writes on April 14th, 1909; "yet I still cling to the hope that I may *yet* SPEAK on God's behalf."

"I have just discovered that you are off to the West Indies. Were Bristol nearer I should be there to wave farewell. I was once almost setting sail to Jamaica myself, but was prevented, as also when I essayed to go again to U.S.A. But perhaps my travelling days are done."

To Rev. Philip A. Hudgell he writes: "Though I am no longer in the forefront of the battle it is mine to wait, and watch, and make intercession. The days are shadowed, but the children of light are not afraid of the dark—and *the morning cometh*." To Rev. C. Douglas Crouch: "I have had three weeks' holiday lately (in a bath-chair) at Bridlington." To Rev. Austin L. Edwards: "I could

wish that more of the students felt called to serve their King and country in this desperate time." To Rev. E. H. Ellis, on his settlement at the East London Tabernacle: "'I will go in the strength of the Lord' is your brave determination, and 'Certainly I will be with you' is the starry promise of the great I AM." To Miss Batts, of Auckland: "It is indeed gratifying to be remembered by friends from whom in the Lord's providence—strange, yet surely good—we have been separated." To Miss Weekes, at the Tabernacle: "The texts were very helpful, especially 'After this lived Job a hundred and forty years.'"

From the bundle of letters written to me during the years, I find one dated March 2nd, 1896, beginning: "On Friday last the following cablegram came from the Secretary of the Auckland Tabernacle, New Zealand: 'Blaikie resigned; it is reported that Brown and Fullerton contemplate visiting Colonies. Could either or any one else supply? How soon, and for how long?'" It was a baseless rumour in each case. From other communications I extract but a few sentences: "I love your letters because I love you. Moreover, they are themselves lovely." "Many thanks for what you call your mist of words in November *Sword and Trowel.* I would not have missed them for anything. I forgot the horrors of the London 'particular,' which still prevails, while reading them. Encore! Encore!" "It is a special joy to greet you as you enter the pulpit of the new Metropolitan Tabernacle. You need not to be assured of a welcome from a Tabernacle

audience, for you have been greatly beloved among us these many years. Moreover, not a few of your converts are to be found in the flock."

From Bavaria he sent a spontaneous postcard dated July 12th, 1907, on the eve of my visit to China.

"DEAR FRIEND FULLERTON,

"I understand that you are to 'farewell' at the Tabernacle. I am glad of that, and wish I could be among the throng of well-wishers. Yet, believe me, no one, in or out of that throng, is more desirous than I for the safe convoy of yourself and your comrade, or more anxious for an altogether successful issue to your tour. I rejoice that you have been selected for this honourable embassy. I wish you a prosperous journey by the will of God. You will do good, and get good, I am sure, and your dear ones will be in the shelter of His Hand.

"The Lord send you good speed this day!

"I am your friend,

"THOMAS SPURGEON."

And since I have been at the Baptist Mission House, he has often shown his interest in the work of the Baptist Missionary Society. In sending a donation on February 3rd, 1915, he writes: "I trust that the well is springing. You cannot have a drop too much for so great and good a work. The Lord give you, my brother, colossal strength for a gigantic task."

CHAPTER XIX

THE ARTIST

THE wish of his mother, loyally obeyed by "Son Tom" at school, will be remembered—"I want particularly to say to you that you are sure not to take drawing lessons from anybody"; and her prophecy will not be forgotten—"Surely some day, if you wish it, you will rise to eminence in your art."

The day came when he wished it. During one of his illnesses the desire suddenly seized him to paint, and though prostrate he produced two little pictures which adorn the walls of his drawing-room still. This started him on a new career when his preaching days were over, and he developed wonderful skill in his most recent vocation. His father used to say that he could draw nothing but a crowd, but the son, with increasing success, produced pictures which worthily adorn any wall, and will, no doubt, increase in value with the years. His art was one of God's alleviations of the weary years that followed his public work, and in Scotland, in the Tyrol, in Bavaria, in Italy, in Switzerland, in Devonshire, around London and his father's early haunts in Essex and Cambridgeshire, he secured admirable subjects for his brush. He was

able to have no less than three Exhibitions of his work.

The first was held in Walker's Gallery, New Bond Street, from October 25th to November 6th, 1909, and consisted of no less than eighty pictures. The next was in the same gallery, from October 2nd–14th, 1911, when he was able to present a hundred pictures. The third at the Stockwell Orphanage, on behalf of that institution, was held in connection with the Annual Festival, from June 21st to 29th, 1916, and it may best be described in the artist's own words in an intimate letter to Mr. Jackson: "The whole proceeds of the sale goes to the Orphanage, and some £40 has been reaped. I paid even for the framing, so that the good work should benefit to the full. Still, what matters it?—the Lord knows. This Exhibition has overtaxed my slender strength. I am tired beyond measure. I got the rest of my pictures back on Friday and have been reinstating them. I showed one hundred and twenty-four in all, seventy of which are for sale."

Mrs. Spurgeon amplifies the story by saying that some of the pictures, which had been reserved for their own home, were sent to grace the Exhibition; these were amongst the earliest sold, and as no note was taken of the names of purchasers, it was impossible for her husband to produce replicas of them, as he had intended to do, for her. But she does not complain.

To return to the earliest exhibition; its progress duing the opening days is shown by some postcards to his friend. *Oct. 26th.*—"A day of incessant rain; nevertheless, we had many visitors and

several purchasers." *Oct. 27th.*—"It poured all yesterday, yet I took orders and made sales to the amount of seven, the perfect number. So that is thirty-five sales, and nine or ten orders already." *Oct. 29th.*—"All goes well. We forge ahead, even though the clouds are grey. To-day we have reached a half-way house, having sold forty out of eighty. In addition to this I have booked perhaps a dozen orders."

It was probably an unprecedented thing for a Baptist minister to have a gallery of pictures exhibited in the heart of London—perhaps anywhere. To Spurgeon lovers the scenes that attracted greatest interest were those associated with his father's early history. "C. H. Spurgeon's Birthplace, Kelvedon"; "Isleham Ferry, where C. H. Spurgeon was baptized"; "Cottage at Teversham, where C. H. Spurgeon's first sermon was preached." There were two different pictures of each, and they were in such demand that the artist made no less than forty reproductions of them.

In a current number of *The British Weekly*, he gives a racy account of his sketching tour in Spurgeon's country. He speaks of the kindness of Mr. John Chivers in putting a swift motor-car at his disposal; of the companionship of Charles Joseph, of Cambridge, with whom he made a trip to Teversham in search of the cottage, which, through Mr. Chivers' liberality, has now become a Nonconformist treasure, being used as a reading-room and institute. "I had scarcely completed the sky, with its cumulus clouds betokening a storm, ere

there came slowly towards me, down the narrow pathway, an old man, somewhat bent. He came smiling, however, and I guessed that he was Mr. Foote, of whom I had heard, who remembered my father's first sermon. As I had a spare camp-stool by me I asked him to take a seat, and for an hour or more we chatted as I plied my sables."

The next day he was at Isleham. "I was sorry I had to miss the good woman who was baptized at the same time as C. H. Spurgeon, and has attended well-nigh every ceremony since. When one put a finger on my drawing and said significantly, 'It was just *there*,' I was better pleased than if an art critic had praised the touch or admired the tone." The third day was devoted to the birthplace at Kelvedon. "I found myself quite at one with an onlooker, who declared his conviction that 'Spurgeon's side ought to buy that property.' I asked for an explanation of the term 'Spurgeon's side,' and discovered that Nonconformity was intended. Good man, *I think so too*."

The press took considerable notice of the Exhibition. *The Baptist Times* said: "Mr. Spurgeon is an artist born and not made: he paints 'the things as he sees them,' and he sees things 'whole and steadily,' as well as beautifully. In lending us his eyes he is but following what every one who knows him will testify has always been the key-note of his life, 'Giving out to others.'" *The British Weekly* said: "The pictures I admired most were those from the Tyrol and the Bavarian Highlands. My favourite of all was 'The street of the Fountains, Garmisch, Bavaria.' One of his own favour-

ites is 'Wendover Canal, Bucks.'" *The Daily Graphic* said: "The drawings show an aptitude for colour, and a happy knack of seizing the picturesque; some have uncommon merit of feeling and execution." Another popular paper, that shall be nameless, said: "Rev. Thomas Spurgeon is now an artist. So he can still place his views before the public." *The Westminster Gazette* said: "He works in a careful, somewhat old-fashioned manner, with none of the affectation that marks the up-to-date amateur; he has an uncommonly good eye for arrangement, while his colour is invariably respectable, and often decidedly effective."

As a glimpse into the way the pictures were produced this—Mr. F. A. Jackson, who was with him at Meran, says: "Perhaps the most impressive bit was a glimpse of the Dolomites from above Bozen. We had a pretty stiff climb to get that. In vain did I protest against it, fearing he would be exhausted. He laughed at my 'grandmotherly objections,' and indeed, for the most part, he took little ill from the long tramps in that delightful air. When a sketch pleased him he would stand back and admire it: the boy in him that never died delighted with the touch of creative work." With reference to another picture Mr. Spurgeon, recalling Ruskin's description of the Alps, writes to his friend: "I have been working at a bare outline I brought from Switzerland of the view from the Stanserhorn. It is mainly mist and mountain-tops, but in the middle distance is a range of snow-clad peaks. I think of calling it—what do you think?—'Suddenly-Behold-Beyond.'"

If one characterization were needed for Mr. Spurgeon it would be "Artist." He was not only an artist in line and colour, he was an artist in words. This was especially true in his prayers, and chiefly in those prayers in the home or amongst little groups, when, with amazing wealth of imagery and use of the unexpected but inevitable word, he gathered up the need of the moment and felt his way to the very heart of God. He was also an artist in souls, eager to see the likeness of Christ reproduced in the lives of men and not satisfied with anything but the best. Yes, that is it: in all realms—Thomas Spurgeon, Artist.

CHAPTER XX

LITERARY ACTIVITIES

As an author Mr. Thomas Spurgeon's literary output is represented by six volumes—he was engaged on a seventh at the time of his death, but of that later. There are five books of sermons and one of verse. The latter, a comparatively early effort, with a preface by his mother, was published in 1892, printed in two colours in keeping with the title, *Scarlet Threads and Bits of Blue.* It contains some capital temperance rhymes and dainty religious pieces. He had quite a gift of versification, but some of his best poems came later. Two verses from this early volume shall suffice.

> Yes, Lord, the night is Thine as surely as the day,
> In silver syllables the " milky way "
> Sets forth Thy name upon night's silver scroll,
> In one long line of light from pole to pole.
>
> The night is Thine ! Its silence speaks of Thee :
> Thine is its hush, and Thine its mystery.
> The stars are Thine : the kindling sparks that fly
> From Thy great anvil, glorious Most High !

Of his first little volume of sermons, published in 1884, *The Gospel of the Grace of God,* we have

AT SPURGEON'S ORPHANAGE.

already written in Chapter V. The next contained twenty sermons selected from the series published week by week in 1897, and was entitled *Light and Love.* In 1902 two volumes appeared—*My Gospel,* containing twelve sermons on general subjects, and *God save the King,* ten addresses concerning King Jesus and His Royal Estate, suggested by the postponed Coronation of King Edward that year. On June 26th a great streamer was stretched across the Tabernacle, bearing the legend, "*Fear God, Honour the King.*"

The book on which he spent most time and thought, both on the contents and illustration, was entitled *Down to the Sea.* It consists of chapters on themes suggested by the mighty deep and the ships that sail thereon, and is full of material for preachers, as well as interesting homilies for general readers. The author knew what he was talking about, for he was at home on the ocean. *The Chart and Compass,* of September 1906, calls him "Spurgeon the Sea-Rover." Dr. Dixon says of the book, "It ought to be published in cheap form, and circulated amongst our sailors by the hundred thousand."

For almost ten years, 1902 to 1912, he was editor of *The Sword and Trowel,* and he took his duties in this department seriously. In times of ill-health he had the valued help of Dr. McCaig, and many of the letters to him concern his editorial responsibilities. A very useful series of "Chats with the Children" appeared from his pen during the year 1904, and during all the years the magazine was conducted with signal ability.

He had long been a contributor to its pages, and his writings were much valued and highly praised by his father. "You write better every time," he said; "you are really a writer of remarkable excellence, style and attractiveness of matter." And again, "Your *Sword and Trowel* pieces are ever welcome to Editor and readers. They are better and better; you will make a racy writer, and do as well with your pen as with your tongue." His earliest appearance was in 1877, when a letter signed by both brothers, appealing for their "Bolingbroke Chapel," occupied a page. Three Australian pieces appeared during 1878, and others in 1879 and 1880. In 1880 an interesting series on "Sayings from the Sea" stands to his credit; and in 1881 there is a contribution each month, his first poem, "Jesus for me," being one of them.

This year also he began, with "Ants and their Antics," the natural history articles which attracted much attention. "The Vegetable Caterpillar" followed in 1883; "My Birds" and "My Beasts" in 1884; "The Ungrateful Bee" in 1885; "Glow-worms," "Spiders," and "Mosquitoes" in 1889; "The Kiwi," with a floral initial drawn and engraved by himself, in 1891; and "Snails" in 1893. These papers might be worth republication in days to come.

"The Pastor's Page" was a feature month by month of the year 1897, and poems and sermons appeared at intervals all through the years. A series of articles entitled, "An Alphabet of Aphorisms" appeared during 1913; and another series, "On the Wing," reporting his journeys on behalf

of the Stockwell Orphanage, during 1914. Memorial notices and comments on the topics of the hour abound, and up to the end there were messages from his pen—in 1917 two pieces, "A New Song for the New Year," and "An Invincible Promise." Altogether, there are two hundred and sixty pieces of his in *The Sword and Trowel* volumes, a creditable output for a busy preacher. In addition to these he contributed occasional articles to *The Home Messenger*, *The Christian Endeavour Times*, *Good Words*, *The Quiver*, and to some American and New Zealand journals. Descriptive pieces about the Stockwell Orphanage were also contributed to its quarterly magazine, *Within our Gates*.

Some of his poems have been given on earlier pages. Here one other shall suffice. It is founded on a beautiful saying of a Russian convert, as reported by Dr. McCaig: "I have loved Jesus a little while, but Jesus has loved me all the time."

Unborn, His love was on me set,
While still a child, disposed to stray,
In youth, averse to Wisdom's way;
He loved me then, He loves me yet:
From Spring's bright dew to Winter's rime,
"Jesus has loved me all the time."

When dead in trespasses and sin,
When Godless, strengthless, lost, undone,
Rebellious as "the younger son,"
The Saviour longed my love to win;
'Spite unbelief—that crowning crime,
"Jesus has loved me all the time."

Yea, since He did my heart compel
His love to answer, and His name to bless,
He has not loved one whit the less,

Though I have failed to love Him well ;
His constancy has proved sublime,
" Jesus has loved me all the time."

'Tis like a flood—this lasting love,
From deeps beneath it welleth up ;
Forth from His ever brimming cup
It poureth on me from above :
Beyond its reach I cannot climb,
For Jesus loves me all the time.

A little while I've loved, but He
The charming bells of love and grace,
Whose music glads the heavenly place,
Has rung from all eternity ;
And I shall *ever* hear their chime.
He'll love when Time's no longer Time.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TRIPLE PRESIDENCY

In addition to the Presidency of the College Conference, to which he was annually elected, Mr. Spurgeon was permanent President of the three great auxiliaries to the Tabernacle Church—the Pastors' College, the Colportage Association, and the Stockwell Orphanage. Each of these offices carried a measure of responsibility, and it was little wonder that at length the burden became too heavy to be borne.

As President of the College from 1896 to the end, he sought to maintain the high tradition of his father, to train preachers rather than to make scholars. "Our policy," said C. H. Spurgeon, "has been to imitate the florist, by planting a large number of slips in the hope that some of them would strike." To Mr. William Olney, then in New Zealand, he wrote on May 25th, 1896: "Last Thursday the College trustees asked me to accept the Presidency of the College. I feel obliged to accept the post, though, truth to tell, I have more than enough to do already. But I am just trusting for fresh supplies as I need them." In this he had the seconding of his brother, and the valued help of Principal McCaig and Professors Hackney and

Gaussen. They all bear witness to his courtesy and brotherliness, and to his wise judgment and sagacious counsel. He presided over the Selection Committee, and his letters bear witness to the thoroughness of spirit with which he approached the solemn decisions concerning candidates for training.

"His messages at the opening or close of session," says Dr. McCaig, "were always full of wisdom and sparkling with wit, and charged with spiritual power, an inspiration to all; none more so than his latest utterances, which, with all the fine qualities of previous messages, had a charm and pathos arising from his conscious weakness and our sympathy with him."

This reference to his wit suggests that this may, perhaps, be the appropriate place to refer to its quality. He had his father's faculty of making play with words, could pun quite easily, but as the years advanced avoided this form of wit rather than indulged it, though many a time he must have been sorely tempted. C. H. Spurgeon used to say that he was most humorous in the pulpit when his bodily weakness was greatest, for then he had not the power to repress the things that clamoured for utterance.

When Thomas Spurgeon took farewell of the College, after his brief studies there, he uttered a *bon-mot* which is quoted to this day: "I have read in Scripture," he said, "that Enoch was translated by faith, but I have discovered in college that Homer can only be translated by work."

His father used to tell, with grateful pride, how

when he had his boys and others out in the country one day in their youth, he set them guessing which trees they liked best. Thomas was silent for some time, but when his father urged him for his opinion he smiled up in his face and answered, "Yew, father," an answer that often brought joy to his father's heart in after years.

The joke his father counted as his best is really worth repeating. Sucking pig was a luxury-dish very much esteemed in Nightingale Lane. I am told that it must be eaten hot. One day it was brought steaming to the table and father and son were in their place, but the worthy Secretary, Rev. J. W. Harrald, had not appeared; he was still in the study. "I wonder what is keeping Harrald," the father said, "he knows we have sucking pig." To which answered Thomas demurely, "Perhaps he has a litter upstairs!"

To return to College matters. Thomas Spurgeon did not find it possible to lecture every Friday as his father had done, but he managed to do it with some frequency, especially in the earlier years, and often these lectures made a great impression. In *The Sword and Trowel* some of them have been reproduced. In 1895, "The Three Ns"; in 1898, "The Students' Stoop"; "Clocks to Mend"; and a most ingenious talk on "How a holiday yields illustration." In 1899, "A Proper Sort of Parson"; in 1905, "The Great Secret"; in 1907, "Affectation." There were many other lectures, of course. In the year prior to his death he spoke to the men on "The Right Text" and "Trifles."

Amongst the great bundle of papers Dr. McCaig

has preserved there are two written messages to the students. One is dated April 28th, 1900, and conveys to the men the hearty thanks of the Church for the help the students had rendered in a mission just concluded in the Tabernacle, and impresses on them the value to their own ministry of the experience. The letter is very grateful to me, but it need not here be reproduced.

The second message to the students is a longer document, dated August 1901, and greets the men as they reassemble after the holidays. It pokes some fun at the tutors, especially at Professor Gaussen, who had just got married. "He is twice the man he was, which is saying a good deal." After praise for tutors and students and a welcome to the freshmen, he proceeds: "You are all ready for real earnest toil, I trust. The time is short. This opportunity will never recur, nor can you expect another to be compared to it in value. You hardly need urging to work—besides, I think the tutors are quite capable of spurring you on should it be necessary. They are one with me in urging upon you a jealous care of your spiritual life. No knowledge is to be compared with the experimental acquaintance with 'Jesus Himself.' No books can take the place of the Book of books. No hour is more helpful than the hour of prayer." And much besides.

In a letter to Dr. McCaig on January 22nd, 1917, the year of his death, he urges him to "tell the brethren and tutors how grieved I am to be away, and wish them all (if not too late) a Happy New Year; or, better still, as Rabbi Duncan said to his

students, ' Gentlemen, I wish you a Happy Eternity.' "

In greeting Mr. F. A. Jackson on June 18th, 1902, when he was about to lecture to the students, he says: " In case I find it absolutely necessary to conserve my strength in the morning, I send a brief message to the brethren. Please assure them that it is a matter of deep regret to me that I have been so little with them this year. They ought to have an able-bodied President, instead of such a weakling, but as they have no voice in appointing him they must make the best of a bad job till there is a change for the better. Yet I am sure they could not find one who loves them more." And again, at another time, evidently after the Revival services at the Tabernacle, he writes: " Tell the students that my soul is singing ' Songs of Praises ' all the time, including, by the way, a large part of the night."

The students repaid him in deep trust and affection. He was their friend, they felt it, and therefore his least word was law. Sometimes he presided at the Friday lecture when another gave it. On July 17th, 1905, he writes again to Dr. McCaig an intimate letter, in which he says: " Judge Willis was with us yesterday, and paid me the high compliment of saying it was worth while coming to hear me read ' Lord speak to me,'— and he is a judge."

To very few he would bare his soul like that; but he valued praise and recognition, and when he was quite sure of his ground did not scruple to say so. To Mr. Jackson he writes, on July 4th, 1905,

about an altogether different matter. He had been invited to speak at one of the mission meetings at the Albert Hall. So he says: "I cannot help telling you about last night. When Lord Kinnaird called on me—oh my! I climbed Torrey's dais as giddily as a ship boy his mast (first go off). The people clapped and cheered and 'went on' *tremendous*. Talk about ovations. I've scarcely slept a wink thinking of it. It has turned my head and puffed me up, and all the rest of it. I was *helped* to speak, and received no end of congratulations. The Glory Song was sung gloriously, and some man sang the ninety and nine most marvellously." Then, in a postscript, "Pardon my vanity in telling you of my reception, but I know you will be glad, and I do *praise God* for giving me favour in the eyes of the people."

As President of the Stockwell Orphanage he was a prime favourite with the girls and boys when he visited them—he had no doubt about that: they would flock round him to receive his greeting and his blessing. At the meetings of the Trustees he was just as welcome, and he took a very practical share in the guidance and governance of the institution. When he resigned the pastoral oversight of the Tabernacle Church he devoted himself, as we have seen, to painting. But that was only a phase, and a new avenue of service eventually presented itself, which brought help both to College and Orphanage.

The first suggestion of it was made by Rev. T. Ll. Edwards, at the annual meeting of the College on May 7th, 1908. It appears that I had spoken until

a late hour and there were but a few minutes left, so he boldly made a plunge for his plan. Turning to Mr. Spurgeon he said, "And what shall this man do?" "Ah, what?" said the President; on which Mr. Edwards urged that he should take the world for his parish, and go forth to plead the needs of both College and Orphanage.

The suggestion took root. In the middle of the following night Thomas Spurgeon burst into laughter, and when his wife asked the reason, he answered, "I think I can see Edwards now, looking into my eyes and saying, 'And what shall this man do?'" Not until two years had passed was the plan put into execution; then, with Mr. Edwards as honorary secretary, the "Thomas Spurgeon Deputation Fund" was organized, and in the autumn of 1911 he began a ministry which embraced Great Britain, lasted for three years, and, in addition to the spiritual impulse it gave to the Churches visited, brought in some £3,000 to the agencies it was designed to help.

The diaries and the correspondence connected with it are before me as I write. Mr. Spurgeon threw himself without reserve into the business, preaching and lecturing north and south and east and west, making hosts of friends for the Institutions and for himself; as some of the letters sent to those who were his hosts, and treasured by them, plainly testify. He himself writes at this period, "I found quite a number of new friends. I shall have room for them without shelving any of the old ones."

The details of this quest would be tedious, but

almost at random I lay my hand on a request for a visit from Berwick-upon-Tweed, signed by Mayor, sheriffs, aldermen, councillors, ministers, and others; a programme which announces Mr. Spurgeon as the preacher in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, and lecturer in the Assembly Hall; a report of a visit to one place in these words, "the people are poor, or else there is a copper mine in the district—I toiled hard for £9 12*s*."; another, "All very good, except the liberty taken with my name. I am not, and never was, the Rev. *Tom* Spurgeon."

Toward the close of the year 1912 Mr. Spurgeon was approached with a view to a visit to South Africa and New Zealand, and for some time such a visit was seriously entertained, but was at length found to be impracticable; and, largely on the ground of health, and on expert advice that absolute rest was essential, on July 23rd, 1914, he definitely resigned the work which had at first seemed to be within his powers, and had already been fruitful to a large degree. On June 14th, 1913, he wrote, "I am a sort of flying machine, but in July I shall turn turtle." The following July he came down with broken wings.

The two years' interval between the suggestion of this work and its adoption were passed chiefly in Devonshire and Cornwall, with intervals in London largely for Orphanage and College business. Two periods were spent at Paignton—from November 29th, 1909, to June 14th, 1910; and from September 23rd, 1910, to April 20th, 1911. During this second visit Mr. Spurgeon preached every

Sunday morning and every Tuesday evening at the Baptist Church, which was then pastorless.

On the death of the headmaster of the Orphanage, Rev. V. J. Charlesworth, Mr. Spurgeon, being now free and somewhat stronger, was appointed as Director of the Orphanage, still holding the office of President. Writing to Mr. G. A. Eaton on February 15th, 1915, he says: "I shall be glad of your prayers and your friends' prayers that God will set His seal on this appointment. It has come as such a surprise, and is such a providence." In spite of his physical weakness, he was able to render important service in this new post. He wrote to Rev. Edward Last on February 27th, 1916: "I am thankful to be able still for a little hedging and ditching on my Master's farm." But by January 26th, 1917, he found this too great a strain and retired from it. To his confidant, Mr. Jackson, he writes: "You will be glad to hear that I have resigned the Stockwell Orphanage directorship. *I could stand it no longer*, and when I fell sick at Christmas-time I thought it was my opportunity. To-day the Board has regretfully agreed to what I insisted on. I shall remain President and Editor, and Special Commissioner, Answerer, Matrons' Prayer-Meeting Conductor, *Sword and Trowel* notes writer—isn't that enough? C. S. is to take up deputation work, on a bigger scale than mine. You will be interested to know that I have undertaken to write the history of the Stockwell Orphanage to its Jubilee—not quite my sort of writing, this. Still, I am having a shot at it, and I hope I shan't miss. I must have an analogy, you know, as I am

attempting to write on *A Goodly Cedar*. It seems to lend itself—God-planted, its growth, its glory and beauty, its scent, its music, its shade, its sap, its support and protection and pruning, etc., etc."

In developing the idea in a letter to his friend, Mr. William Higgs, he notes that George Müller's work was compared by C. H. S. to cedars of Lebanon, and that "fifty is the youth of age." After giving the outline of Contents, he says: "Under some such headings I hope to bring in everything of interest and use. I hope the idea is worth developing and will prove a change from the ordinary official guide-book style."

He did well that it was in his heart, but the idea was frustrated by a paralytic stroke, and the care of the Orphanage has now passed into the capable hands of his brother, who, as President-Director, is making the Jubilee year, without the book, a time of advance. May the future hold for him and for Spurgeon's Orphanage much prosperity and grace!

The third Presidency was that of the Metropolitan Colportage Association. Mr. Spurgeon's interest in this good work was evidenced by his addresses at the Annual Conference of the Colporteurs. In *The Sword and Trowel* for 1895, we find one on "Constancy and Consistency"; and in 1896 another on K. E. P. T., while in the volume for 1899 there is a plea for colportage under the title, "A Mighty Weapon"; and in 1901 another appeal, "It is still perfectly true."

So to the end his life was full of faith and of good works. Where he came he was the natural leader, where he led there was blessing and goodwill.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CLOSING DAYS

Of the last year of Mr. Spurgeon's life little need be said. He lived in retirement, and his house was taken down, not suddenly, but brick by brick. He saw the end approaching, but it came gently, and he was never less than his brave, considerate self, all the while. "San Remo," his charming but modest residence, is near Tooting Bec Common, and he used to walk there; later, when he was partially paralysed, he walked only in his own little garden, a garden to which Mrs. Spurgeon has devoted herself with love and skill, as much for his sake as for her own. She and his daughter Vera were in constant attendance on the invalid: for a little while they went to Tunbridge Wells, and stayed with his friend, Rev. F. J. Feltham; but there was no place like home, and there the uneventful waiting days were spent, not unregarded indeed by his friends outside, but almost sacred to his own family circle. On the morning of October 20th, 1917, he spoke of a pain between his eyes, and lapsed into unconsciousness; and while the sun was yet high in the sky he passed to his heaven.

The wonder was not that he died at sixty-one, but that he lived so long. He was four years older than his father. When it is remembered that twice he had to flee our shores because of threatened lung trouble, it is remarkable that there was no mischief there at the end. All along he suffered from nephritis, which developed into arterio sclerosis, and the direct cause of death was the breaking of an artery in the brain. Though he was always a good soldier, he was ever conscious that there was something wrong, and never felt quite normal. "The doctor is, I think, a little disappointed that I have not made more headway," he wrote to Rev. Austin L. Edwards, when he was staying at Llandrindod Wells, "but I myself am not surprised, therefore not discouraged."

Some of his own references to his health may perhaps be assembled at this point. To Jackson he wrote on April 2nd, 1906: "The doctor overhauled me on Monday and pronounced me better. It was news to me—but good news. He *ought* to know. He counsels patience. Ah! patience, that's it. Patience sees the grape-juice turned into the sweetmeat and the mulberry leaf into silk." And on May 8th, 1914: "I have suffered from almost constant headache, and when I feel a little stronger the next meeting pulls me off my perch again. Terrible slackness, the doctor calls my condition, and such indeed it is."

To Rev. Philip A. Hudgell on December 27th, 1914: "The specialist says I ought never to have engaged in that deputation work, and must never dream of resuming it. It appears that to do

nothing is the only hope of doing some little something." On February 3rd, 1915, he writes to Dr. McCaig: "On Sunday evening I was pressed in the spirit, and have been oppressed in the body ever since"; while to Rev. Walter Owen, of Penzance, on January 26th, 1916, this is his report: "I am not much in the papers now. I have had my share thereof. I am grateful, though, that I have not yet figured in the Obituary Column."

The celebration of his Diamond Jubilee on September 20th, 1916, gave his friends an opportunity of special greeting. An interviewer of *The Christian* writes: "Looking back over the sixty years, Mr. Spurgeon's uppermost feeling is one of overwhelming gratitude for the goodness and mercy that have followed him continually, and particularly for the special grace and strength granted, so that a full and fruitful life has been lived, notwithstanding severely hampering conditions. He feels himself to be, not in midstream, but in more or less of a backwater; yet his firm grip upon life is well maintained, and he is upheld by the consciousness of the affectionate goodwill of a host of friends both in this country and at the Antipodes."

Again we must draw on his intimacies with F. A. Jackson: "You decline to believe I am sixty. Oh! but I could at times believe myself to be a hundred. I have had congratulations galore. The letters were lying (only in one sense, I think) seventy deep before the day was done, and the kind notices and articles in *The Baptist Times*, *The British Weekly*, *The Christian*, and *The Life of*

Faith, are bringing me in a fresh and fragrant crop. It is all very wonderful and humbling. It must be confessed it is very gratifying, too."

Of him Jackson writes: "Even in sickness, of which he seemed to have more than his share; in sorrow and distress, of which he bore a man's full load; and under the pressure of exhausting labours and solemn responsibilities, I cannot recall an instance in which he was less than his lovable self.

"Did ever a man so poke fun at his own aches and pains, or make his own sick-room such a place of wholesome mirth? He was ill indeed when he could no longer make those that were near him laugh or smile.

"His nature was utterly foreign to subterfuge of every sort. A master of tact, he was incapable of pretence, and it is safe to say that if ever he made an enemy his enemy never challenged, or so much as questioned, his honour.

"Of that still deeper thing—his intimate intercourse with Christ—I must not write, except to say this: it was the ruling passion of his life.

"As the Samoan chief said of Stevenson, so would I say of my friend: 'The day was never long enough for his kindness.'"

Rev. Hugh D. Brown, of Dublin, who was his intimate friend, writes: "To my mind, the best sermon I ever heard from him was the somewhat quaint and suggestive utterance, 'Bar and all,' and now he has had through grace a 'bar and all' salvation into the presence of the King.

"When we once had the joy of a couple of weeks' fellowship at Loch Katrine, I remember our visiting

Glengyle, the home of the MacGregors, where, in their romantic family burial ground, the inscription upon the central tomb ran thus concerning one of the departed heroes: 'Who did his best for the old name'; and methinks I can see another penman write this inspired epitaph in connection with our beloved brother: 'Thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for *my name's sake* hast laboured and hast not fainted.'"

Here, I think, we may pause, and let his son, Mr. T. Harold Spurgeon, speak. He is good enough to write to me from his home in Dublin with the characteristic name of "Bohernabreena," and says: "The following scraps are, I am afraid, only trivialities in the life of one who 'filled the public eye' as much as my dear father did, albeit to me they are very precious memories. I send them along in the hope that amongst them there may be, perhaps, one or two touches that may serve: please do not feel that I shall mind in the least if you think there is nothing worthy of inclusion, for, from the public point of view, I have come to the same conclusion.

"One of my earliest definite recollections of father dates back to the autumn of 1899. We were in the train coming home from 'Westwood' (how brim-full of happiness those days were for me!), and, seeing his eyes full of sadness and anxiety as he read the evening paper, I asked him what was wrong. 'I'm afraid there's going to be war, old boy; and it's a wrong war';—and he explained to me very simply the trouble in South Africa, and stamped my child's mind with a hatred of Jingoism

which has remained, and will remain, please God, as long as I live.

"Busy as he always was at the Tabernacle, he would find time almost every day to amuse and instruct us. A great feature of those days was his 'spelling-bees,' which usually took place at tea-time, and it was exceptional indeed when he failed to propound one word, at least, which would baffle us both. Inaccurate spelling was always one of his *bêtes-noires*, and he spared no pains to ensure our correctness in this respect.

"He took considerable interest in Biblical archæology, and many happy hours I have spent as a child with him over *Cassell's Bible Dictionary*, while he explained the pictures to me. One of the red-letter days of my life was when (in May, 1901) he took me on my first visit to the British Museum: we began with the Egyptian and Assyrian Department, and I don't think we got any further than that; I felt I could stay there for ever, and I think he was well content. In the afternoon of that same day he took me for the first time to Kennington Oval. It was Surrey *v.* Gloucester, and I shall never forget my breathless interest as he pointed out to my admiring gaze such mighty ones as Bobby Abel and Tom Richardson, and G. L. Jessop. He was very fond of cricket all his life, and we went back together to the Oval more than once in after years.

"Another unforgettable day, of a very different sort, is that on which my dear mother's life was hanging in the balance during her serious illness towards the end of 1903. He had just lost his own

dear mother, and he called Vera and me into the dining-room, and prayed for Mother and for us and for himself, as only he could pray. I cannot recall anything he said; but the spirit of that prayer is with me still.

"Ever since my schooldays began he used to talk a good deal to me about literature. I think there was nothing he really loved just as much as *The Ancient Mariner*; he would read it and re-read it, and quote it again and again. Perhaps I should not have said 'nothing,' for I fancy not even it came before *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Other favourites of his were Milton (he loved to hear him read aloud), and Richard Jefferies and Carlyle. He had intense reverence for Ruskin as an art critic: I doubt whether he felt just the same about his Economics. He read Dickens over and over again: his favourite books he had been through many times.

"I do not recall ever hearing him speak with any appreciation of Shakespeare or of Tennyson; I asked him once, a few years ago, what he thought of Browning, but he only replied, 'I can't read him; he's too deep for me.' (I fancy it was the brusque style rather than the deep philosophy that was the real barrier in this case.) His delight when I sent him, three or four years ago, a copy of Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*, knew no bounds. A year or two later he wrote to me, 'Oh! what joy Francis Thompson's 'Kingdom of God' has brought me lately!' (I had copied out the poem and sent it over to him, thinking it would be after his own heart.)

"Of his graciousness and modesty I need not say much, for you know. He wrote to me once, 'It is sweet to be loved, even if one has to wonder why.' On one occasion he met with an artist of some note, who subjected his work to pretty severe criticism. Father closes his account of the interview with these words, 'It was well to sit at the feet of a Master—even though he kicked at times!'

"Yet, as all know, he could hit hard; I have seen bumptiousness and bluster cower on more than one occasion before his gentle and serene dignity. 'Well, Mr. Spurgeon,' said an influential host of his, at the time that the present Premier was at the height of his unpopularity with the capitalist class, seven years or so ago, 'what do you think of that abominable man, Lloyd George?' 'I think he is a God-raised man,' was the reply. The subject was abruptly changed.

"He was always an optimist, even about himself, but I think he knew during his last few years that the end (as we pagan-souled Christians still call it!) was not far off. He wrote to me in June, 1916, 'How I wish I could say "I am really better." The little rest has freshened me up a bit, but I cannot disguise from myself that (to put it mildly) I am NOT getting better. Yet all is well, and I may serve another day, if the Lord sees fit.' When I saw him last, in August of last year, he talked quite freely (as far as his speech would allow him, poor dear) of his Home-going. 'They say it might be any time. . . . I'm ready, . . . but we should all be ready; . . . it may be you that will be taken first, old boy.'

" The last letters I received from him (just before the first stroke) were very full of the projected history of the Orphanage, which he was just undertaking. He says: ' Figures and facts require a good deal of hunting up and verifying, and thrice-told incidents are difficult to re-tell, but I shall break the back of it by and by, if I don't, in the meantime, break my own ! . . . It is not quite MY sort of writing—still, I have pleasure in hunting for the gold, in putting it into the crucible, and in trying to fashion a crown.' "

. . . . .

In London he had three homes: 87, Knatchbull Road, Camberwell; 14, Macaulay Road, Clapham Common; and 40, Prentis Road, Streatham, where he fell asleep. At intervals during his wandering days he had rooms in various places, chiefly at Montrell Road, Streatham Hill, where he returned again and again. In his last home, " San Remo," his widow and daughter still reside, facing life bravely with the heritage of a name the world honours and of a memory fragrant with sweetness.

Rev. H. H. Driver, who accompanied him on one of his voyages, says truly, as reported in *The New Zealand Baptist*: " His own lovely life was more eloquent than his finest sermon. He ever radiated the sunshine of a singularly unselfish heart. He found his chief pleasure in diffusing happiness around him. Few men had a finer capacity for friendship. He grappled to himself with hooks of steel the spirits he found congenial to his own."

Dr. McCaig, in his memorial article, wrote truly: "Undoubtedly he had the pastor's heart. Who could have been more sympathetic with the sorrowing, more tender to the erring, more encouraging to the downcast? How the people used to crowd around him at the prayer-meeting to get a pleasant smile, a cheery word, and a grip of his hand, that hand which had so much of the softness of his father's. The young were naturally attracted to him, and, most singular, the oldest people were the most attached to him."

"Even in the last months," Mr. F. H. Ford recalls, "when his weakness and pain were at their worst, he constantly thought of the needs of others, and, as one who knew him best remarked, 'he was always trying to make some one happy.' As the invalid passed along the roads in his short periods of exercise, the little children would run across, kiss his hand, and speed away. Of incidents which could be mentioned that tell the kindliness of his heart, one little story is too tempting to omit. On the eve of Christmas last, the sick pastor remembered the household of a worthy minister, where he thought the preparations for the festive season might be inadequate. With his own hands he carried the Christmas dinner to the house through densely dark streets, and refusing the help of the shopkeeper lest a mistake in delivery might be made, handed the package to the good housewife."

What he said at the second anniversary of his father's death might now be said of himself: "During more than one stormy passage across the ocean I have seen the captain mount his bridge

and stand by the instrument that communicates with the engine-room below. Sometimes he takes the lever and moves it to 'Stand by.' Down in the engine-room all is attention, for they expect another order presently. I think the Great Captain has His hand upon the telegraphic instrument in the case of some of you who have indications that you are nearing the port, and God says 'Stand by'; be ready for the next order!! Stand prepared for what is coming soon. Then He moves the needle a little later to 'Slow.' Presently the Lord Himself will grasp the lever again and put it to 'Stop.' Soon after that the cable is run out, the ship is brought up, and the voyage is over. So has it been with our dear pastor. How could that ship maintain such wondrous speed so long!"

He had faced death and conquered it long before the last call came, faced it for himself and others.

When Mr. Thomas Cox, an old student of the college, and for thirty-two years an Elder of the Church, died, Mr. Spurgeon gave the address at his funeral on March 19th, 1914. As an example of the way he could call forth friendship on the part of others because he gave himself to them, a part of the address may be quoted:

"Nor need you wonder that I myself speak tearfully of him. He was my father's friend and my own friend. I could tell you things, trifling in themselves perhaps, which showed so plainly that this man of few words and quiet mood was full of heart, and much more than a mere philosopher.

"I may be allowed to tell of my last interview with my friend. At my entry he seemed slow to

recognize me, but he gradually awoke to the fact that his message to the effect that he was 'very, very ill,' had brought me to his side. He was calm, resigned, and even cheerful, and oh! so grateful. I read to him the portion for the day in *Morning by Morning*, then offered prayer, and attempted to say farewell. Then it was that, sitting up in his bed—a somewhat gaunt figure it must be owned, yet full of graciousness withal—he held my hand in both of his, and proceeded to pronounce on me the benediction Jehovah gave the priests of Israel to bless His people with: 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.' Then followed a heartfelt 'Amen' from both of us.

"I value that blessing more than I can say. I believe, with C. H. Spurgeon, that 'God allows His people whom He has made kings and priests to put His name upon others, and to pronounce blessings upon them: their word shall stand, and what they bound on earth shall be bound in heaven.'"

In the early Tabernacle days, when there were many perplexities, in one of his Conference talks he ejaculated, "Oh! when shall we get into the blue." The College Principal treasured the sentence, and when the President departed, wrote some verses with the refrain. Two of them, which will find response in the hearts of others, run:—

"The rocks and the shoals of his life are all past,
Safely is weathered each pitiless blast,
And the calm clear water is reached at last
And glad is the mariner true."

" And we who have loved him longest and best,
Though by his passing our hearts are oppress,
Yet may rejoice he has entered his rest,
And has now passed into the blue."

Hundreds of messages were sent to Mrs. Spurgeon when it became known that Thomas Spurgeon had passed. Not a few wrote that he had been to them the dearest friend on earth ; all recalled his courtesy and gentleness. Three telegrams are treasured. From Auckland Tabernacle, " Deepest Christian sympathy on loss of one held in honoured memory." From Hugh D. Brown, who was so soon to follow him, " Irish Baptists thanking God for stalwart leader, noble character, kindly heart, unswerving Calvary loyalty, tender profound sympathy. John seventeen twenty-four." While from Toronto, Dr. and Mrs. A. Hall sent the message, " Our mourning hearts send tenderest sympathy. Place anchor to dearest of dear friends."

The Baptist Church of Paris sent a letter written both in French and English, and signed by all the members of the Church present at the meeting. Rev. J. H. Shakespeare sent a fitting message on behalf of the Baptist Union. Dr. Charles Brown said : " It was a great privilege to know him, a privilege for which I shall always be thankful. One is disposed to envy him now, and to say with special emphasis, ' Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,' away from this world which is plunged in tears and sorrow."

Miss R. L. Clark is good enough to send me a copy of some verses Mr. Spurgeon wrote in her album, entitled " At Home." The first five stanzas

describe the scene of an artist, no doubt himself, and a little maid who drew nearer and nearer to his easel.

"Where do you live, my little maid?"
The artist softly said,
Forthwith she let her eyelids down,
And shook her golden head.

So he, as if to say, "Is *this*
Or *that* your dwelling place?"
His pencil poised, first here, then there,
The while he watched her face.

He pointed to the old church tower,
And to the windmill hill,
Then to the red-roofed cottages,
But she was silent still.

The sketch complete, "Good-bye, good-bye,
My little friend," he said.
"Please—Sir—I—lives—at home," she cried,
And thro' the cornfield sped.

. . . . .

They ask me where my heaven will be,
I little light afford,
I only know that I shall dwell
"At home" with my dear Lord.

The funeral service was held in the Metropolitan Tabernacle on Friday, October 26th, 1917. Dr. J. W. Ewing presided. Dr. A. C. Dixon read the Scripture. Rev. Dinsdale T. Young led in prayer. Rev. F. J. Feltham gave an address full of feeling and grace, the Orphanage children sang, and then the wearied body was taken to its last resting-place in Norwood Cemetery, where, after another brief service, it was laid hard by his father's tomb,

awaiting the day when they both shall rise amidst the multitude of other saints who rest in those acres.

The last public meeting Thomas Spurgeon addressed was held at Tooting on behalf of the Pioneer Mission. He came in late and at first sat in the congregation. I happened to be there, and when I had spoken, the Chairman, Mr. John Chown, called him up, and welcomed him with a dignified grace and a tender courtesy that even at the time reminded me of Mary anointing the Lord for His burial. After some general references, Mr. Spurgeon spoke from his deepest heart of his own experience of Christ. And where did this champion of orthodoxy find expression for it? In Francis Thompson! The two men were so different, and yet they both had suffered, and both believed. So it was with an accent of conviction that Spurgeon quoted the verses:

> "But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
> Cry! and upon thy so sore loss
> Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder,
> Pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross.
>
> "Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
> Cry—clinging Heaven by the hems,
> And lo, Christ walking on the water
> Not of Gennesareth but Thames!"

Other things he said, exhorting us all to the highest, and ere he closed his neat ten minutes' speech, he reverted again to Thompson's poem, "In no strange land." It scarcely sounded like poetry, and probably most persons there thought the words

to be his own, but an awe fell upon the people as he spoke them in that voice so like his father's, full of tone and tenderness, with a strong grasp of the hand when he reached the final clause :

> " O world invisible, we view thee ;
> O world intangible, we touch thee,
> O world unknowable, we know thee,
> Inapprehensible, we clutch thee."

We went homeward together in the same tram-car, and—a small thing, but not a slight thing, for it was a symbol—he paid my fare. I render him this tribute.

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